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**ENGLISH PROSE**

**VOLUME FIVE**



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# ENGLISH PROSE

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VOLUME V—MRS. GASKELL TO HENRY JAMES



HUMPHREY MILFORD  
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## NOTE

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# ELIZABETH CLEGHORN GASKELL

1810-65

## CRANFORD SOCIETY

IN the first place, Cranford is in possession of the Amazons ; all the holders of houses, above a certain rent, are women. If a married couple come to settle in the town, somehow the gentleman disappears ; he is either fairly frightened to death by being the only man in the Cranford evening parties, or he is accounted for by being with his regiment, his ship, or closely engaged in business all the week in the great neighbouring commercial town of Drumble, distant only twenty miles on a railroad. In short, whatever does become of the gentlemen, they are not at Cranford. What could they do if they were there ? The surgeon has his round of thirty miles, and sleeps at Cranford ; but every man cannot be a surgeon. For keeping the trim gardens full of choice flowers without a weed to speck them ; for frightening away little boys who look wistfully at the said flowers through the railings ; for rushing out at the geese that occasionally venture into the gardens if the gates are left open ; for deciding all questions of literature and politics without troubling themselves with unnecessary reasons or arguments ; for obtaining clear and correct knowledge of everybody's affairs in the parish ; for keeping their neat maid-servants in admirable order ; for kindness (somewhat dictatorial) to the poor, and real tender good offices to

each other whenever they are in distress, the ladies of Cranford are quite sufficient. 'A man,' as one of them observed to me once, 'is so in the way in the house !' Although the ladies of Cranford know all each other's proceedings, they are exceedingly indifferent to each other's opinions. Indeed, as each has her own individuality, not to say eccentricity, pretty strongly developed, nothing is so easy as verbal retaliation ; but somehow goodwill reigns among them to a considerable degree.

The Cranford ladies have only an occasional little quarrel, spirted out in a few peppery words and angry jerks of the head ; just enough to prevent the even tenor of their lives from becoming too flat. Their dress is very independent of fashion ; as they observe, 'What does it signify how we dress here at Cranford, where everybody knows us ?' And if they go from home, their reason is equally cogent : 'What does it signify how we dress here, where nobody knows us ?' The materials of their clothes are, in general, good and plain, and most of them are nearly as scrupulous as Miss Tyler, of cleanly memory ; but I will answer for it, the last gigot, the last tight and scanty petticoat in wear in England, was seen in Cranford—and seen without a smile.

I can testify to a magnificent family red silk umbrella, under which a gentle little spinster, left alone of many brothers and sisters, used to patter to church on rainy days. Have you any red silk umbrellas in London ? We had a tradition of the first that had ever been seen in Cranford ; and the little boys mobbed it, and called it 'a stick in petticoats'. It might have been the very red silk one I have described, held by a strong father over

a troop of little ones ; the poor little lady—the survivor of all—could scarcely carry it.

Then there were rules and regulations for visiting and calls ; and they were announced to any young people, who might be staying in the town, with all the solemnity with which the old Manx laws were read once a year on the Tinwald Mount.

‘ Our friends have sent to inquire how you are after your journey to-night, my dear ’ (fifteen miles, in a gentleman’s carriage) ; ‘ they will give you some rest to-morrow, but the next day, I have no doubt, they will call ; so be at liberty after twelve—from twelve to three are our calling-hours.’

Then, after they had called,

‘ It is the third day ; I dare say your mamma has told you, my dear, never to let more than three days elapse between receiving a call and returning it ; and also, that you are never to stay longer than a quarter of an hour.’

‘ But am I to look at my watch ? How am I to find out when a quarter of an hour has passed ? ’

‘ You must keep thinking about the time, my dear, and not allow yourself to forget it in conversation.’

As everybody had this rule in their minds, whether they received or paid a call, of course no absorbing subject was ever spoken about. We kept ourselves to short sentences of small talk, and were punctual to our time.

I imagine that a few of the gentlefolks of Cranford were poor, and ~~had some difficulty~~ in making both ends meet ; but they were like the Spartans, and concealed their smart under a smiling face. We none of us spoke of money, because that subject ~~savoured of~~ commerce and trade, and though

some might be poor, we were all aristocratic. The Cranfordians had that kindly *esprit de corps* which made them overlook all deficiencies in success when some among them tried to conceal their poverty. When Mrs. Forrester, for instance, gave a party in her baby-house of a dwelling, and the little maiden disturbed the ladies on the sofa by a request that she might get the tea-tray out from underneath, every one took this novel proceeding as the most natural thing in the world; and talked on about household forms and ceremonies, as if we all believed that our hostess had a regular servants' hall, second table, with housekeeper and steward, instead of the one little charity-school maiden, whose short ruddy arms could never have been strong enough to carry the tray upstairs, if she had not been assisted in private by her mistress, who now sat in state, pretending not to know what cakes were sent up; though she knew, and we knew, and she knew that we knew, and we knew that she knew that we knew, she had been busy all the morning making tea-bread and sponge-cakes.

There were one or two consequences arising from this general but unacknowledged poverty, and this very much acknowledged gentility, which were not amiss, and which might be introduced into many circles of society to their great improvement. For instance, the inhabitants of Cranford kept early hours, and clattered home in their pattens, under the guidance of a lantern-bearer, about nine o'clock at night; and the whole town was abed and asleep by half-past ten. Moreover, it was considered 'vulgar' (a tremendous word in Cranford) to give anything expensive, in the way of eatable or drinkable, at the evening entertainments. Wafer

bread-and-butter and sponge-biscuits were all that the Honourable Mrs. Jamieson gave ; and she was sister-in-law to the late Earl of Glenmire, although she did practise such ' elegant economy '.

' Elegant economy ! ' How naturally one falls back into the phraseology of Cranford ! There, economy was always ' elegant ', and money-spending always ' vulgar and ostentatious ' ; a sort of sour-grapeism, which made us very peaceful and satisfied. I never shall forget the dismay felt when a certain Captain Brown came to live at Cranford, and openly spoke about his being poor—not in a whisper to an intimate friend, the doors and windows being previously closed ; but, in the public street ! in a loud military voice ! alleging his poverty as a reason for not taking a particular house. The ladies of Cranford were already rather moaning over the invasion of their territories by a man and a gentleman. He was a half-pay Captain, and had obtained some situation on a neighbouring railroad, which had been vehemently petitioned against by the little town ; and if, in addition to his masculine gender, and his connexion with the obnoxious railroad, he was so brazen as to talk of being poor—why ! then, indeed, he must be sent to Coventry.\* Death was as true and as common as poverty ; yet people never spoke about that, loud out in the streets. It was a word not to be mentioned to ears polite. We had tacitly agreed to ignore that any with whom we associated on terms of visiting equality could ever be prevented by poverty from doing anything that they wished. If we walked to or from a party, it was because the night was so fine, or the air so refreshing ; not because sedan-chairs were expensive. If we wore

prints, instead of summer silks, it was because we preferred a washing material ; and so on, till we blinded ourselves to the vulgar fact, that we were, all of us, people of very moderate means. Of course, then, we did not know what to make of a man who could speak of poverty as if it was not a disgrace. Yet, somehow, Captain Brown made himself respected in Cranford, and was called upon, in spite of all resolutions to the contrary. I was surprised to hear his opinions quoted as authority, at a visit which I paid to Cranford, about a year after he had settled in the town. My own friends had been among the bitterest opponents of any proposal to visit the Captain and his daughters, only twelve months before ; and now he was even admitted in the tabooed hours before twelve. True, it was to discover the cause of a smoking chimney, before the fire was lighted ; but still Captain Brown walked upstairs, nothing daunted, spoke in a voice too large for the room, and joked quite in the way of a tame man, about the house. He had been blind to all the small slights, and omissions of trivial ceremonies, with which he had been received. He had been friendly, though the Cranford ladies had been cool ; he had answered small sarcastic compliments in good faith ; and with his manly frankness had overpowered all the shrinking which met him as a man who was not ashamed to be poor. And, at last, his excellent masculine common sense, and his facility in devising expedients to overcome domestic dilemmas, had gained him an extraordinary place as authority among the Cranford ladies. He, himself, went on in his course, as unaware of his popularity, as he had been of the reverse ; and I am sure he was

startled one day, when he found his advice so highly esteemed, as to make some counsel which he had given in jest, be taken in sober, serious earnest.

It was on this subject—an old lady had an Alderney cow, which she looked upon as a daughter. You could not pay the short quarter of an hour call, without being told of the wonderful milk or wonderful intelligence of this animal. The whole town knew and kindly regarded Miss Betsy Barker's Alderney; therefore great was the sympathy and regret when, in an unguarded moment, the poor cow tumbled into a lime-pit. She moaned so loudly that she was soon heard, and rescued; but meanwhile the poor beast had lost most of her hair, and came out looking naked, cold, and miserable, in a bare skin. Everybody pitied the animal, though a few could not restrain their smiles at her droll appearance. Miss Betsy Barker absolutely cried with sorrow and dismay; and it was said she thought of trying a bath of oil. This remedy, perhaps, was recommended by some one of the number whose advice she asked; but the proposal, if ever it was made, was knocked on the head by Captain Brown's decided 'Get her a flannel waistcoat and flannel drawers, ma'am, if you wish to keep her alive. But my advice is, kill the poor creature at once.'

Miss Betsy Barker dried her eyes, and thanked the Captain heartily; she set to work, and by and by all the town turned out to see the Alderney meekly going to her pasture, clad in dark grey flannel. I have watched her myself many a time. Do you ever see cows dressed in grey flannel in London?

Captain Brown had taken a small house on the outskirts of the town, where he lived with his two daughters. He must have been upwards of sixty at the time of the first visit I paid to Cranford, after I had left it as a residence. (But he had a wiry, well-trained, elastic figure ; a stiff military throw-back of his head, and a springing step, which made him appear much younger than he was.) His eldest daughter looked almost as old as himself, and betrayed the fact that his real, was more than his apparent, age. Miss Brown must have been forty ; she had a sickly, pained, careworn expression on her face, and looked as if the gaiety of youth had long faded out of sight. Even when young she must have been plain and hard-featured. Miss Jessie Brown was ten years younger than her sister, and twenty shades prettier. Her face was round and dimpled. Miss Jenkyns once said, in a passion against Captain Brown (the cause of which I will tell you presently), ' that she thought it was time for Miss Jessie to leave off her dimples, and not always be trying to look like a child.' It was true that there was something childlike in her face ; and there will be, I think, till she dies, though she should live to a hundred. Her eyes were large blue wondering eyes, looking straight at you ; her nose was unformed and snub, and her lips were red and dewy ; she wore her hair, too, in little rows of curls, which heightened this appearance. I do not know whether she was pretty or not ; but I liked her face, and so did everybody, and I do not think she could help her dimples. She had something of her father's jauntiness of gait and manner ; and any female observer might detect a slight difference in the attire of the two sisters—that of Miss Jessie

being about two pounds per annum more expensive than Miss Brown's. Two pounds was a large sum in Captain Brown's annual disbursements.

Such was the impression made upon me by the Brown family, when I first saw them all together in Cranford church. The Captain I had met before—on the occasion of the smoky chimney, which he had cured by some simple alteration in the flue. In church, he held his double eye-glass to his eyes during the Morning Hymn, and then lifted up his head erect, and sang out loud and joyfully. He made the responses louder than the clerk—an old man with a piping feeble voice, who, I think, felt aggrieved at the Captain's sonorous bass, and quavered higher and higher in consequence.

On coming out of church, the brisk Captain paid the most gallant attention to his two daughters. He nodded and smiled to his acquaintances; but he shook hands with none until he had helped Miss Brown to unfurl her umbrella, and relieved her of her prayer-book, and had waited patiently till she, with trembling nervous hands, had taken up her gown to walk through the wet roads.

I wondered what the Cranford ladies did with Captain Brown at their parties. We had often rejoiced, in former days, that there was no gentleman to be attended to, and to find conversation for, at the card-parties. We had congratulated ourselves upon the snugness of the evenings; and, in our love for gentility, and distaste of mankind, we had almost persuaded ourselves that to be a man was to be 'vulgar'; so that when I found my friend and hostess, Miss Jenkyns, was going to have a party in my honour, and that Captain and the Miss Browns were invited, I wondered much

what would be the course of the evening. Card-tables, with green baize tops, were set out by daylight, just as usual; it was the third week in November, so the evenings closed in about four. Candles, and clean packs of cards were arranged on each table. The fire was made up; the neat maid-servant had received her last directions; and there we stood dressed in our best, each with a candle-lighter in our hands, ready to dart at the candles as soon as the first knock came. Parties in Cranford were solemn festivities, making the ladies feel gravely elated, as they sat together in their best dresses. As soon as three had arrived, we sat down to 'Preference', I being the unlucky fourth. The next four comers were put down immediately to another table; and presently the tea-trays, which I had seen set out in the store-room as I passed in the morning, were placed each on the middle of a card-table. The china was delicate egg-shell; the old-fashioned silver glittered with polishing; but the eatables were of the slightest description. While the trays were yet on the table, Captain and the Miss Browns came in; and I could see, that somehow or other the Captain was a favourite with all the ladies present. Ruffled brows were smoothed, sharp voices lowered at his approach. Miss Brown looked ill, and depressed almost to gloom. Miss Jessie smiled as usual, and seemed nearly as popular as her father. He immediately and quietly assumed the man's place in the room, attended to every one's wants, lessened the pretty maid-servant's labour by waiting on empty cups, and bread-and-butterless ladies; and yet did it all in so easy and dignified a manner, and so much as if it were a matter of course for the

strong to attend to the weak, that he was a true man throughout. He played for threepenny points with as grave an interest as if they had been pounds ; and yet, in all his attention to strangers, he had an eye on his suffering daughter ; for suffering I was sure she was, though to many eyes she might only appear to be irritable. Miss Jessie could not play cards ; but she talked to the sitters-out, who, before her coming, had been rather inclined to be cross. She sang, too, to an old cracked piano, which I think had been a spinet in its youth. Miss Jessie sang ' Jock of Hazeldean ' a little out of tune ; but we were none of us musical, though Miss Jenkyns beat time, out of time, by way of appearing to be so.

It was very good of Miss Jenkyns to do this ; for I had seen that, a little before, she had been a good deal annoyed by Miss Jessie Brown's unguarded admission (*à propos* of Shetland wool) that she had an uncle, her mother's brother, who was a shopkeeper in Edinburgh. Miss Jenkyns tried to drown this confession by a terrible cough—for the Honourable Mrs. Jamieson was sitting at the card-table nearest Miss Jessie, and what would she say or think, if she found out she was in the same room with a shopkeeper's niece ! But Miss Jessie Brown (who had no tact, as we all agreed, the next morning) *would* repeat the information, and assure Miss Pole she could easily get her the identical Shetland wool required, ' through my uncle, who has the best assortment of Shetland goods of any one in Edinbro'.' It was to take the taste of this out of our mouths, and the sound of this out of our ears, that Miss Jenkyns proposed music ; so I say again, it was very good of her to beat time to the song.

When the trays reappeared with biscuits and wine, punctually at a quarter to nine, there was conversation ; comparing of cards, and talking over tricks ; but, by and by, Captain Brown sported a bit of literature.

‘ Have you seen any numbers of *The Pickwick Papers* ? ’ said he. (They were then publishing in parts.) ‘ Capital thing ! ’

Now, Miss Jenkyns was daughter of a deceased rector of Cranford ; and, on the strength of a number of manuscript sermons, and a pretty good library of divinity, considered herself literary, and looked upon any conversation about books as a challenge to her. So she answered and said, ‘ Yes, she had seen them ; indeed, she might say she had read them.’

‘ And what do you think of them ? ’ exclaimed Captain Brown. ‘ Aren’t they famously good ? ’

So urged, Miss Jenkyns could not but speak.

‘ I must say, I don’t think they are by any means equal to Dr. Johnson. Still, perhaps, the author is young. Let him persevere, and who knows what he may become if he will take the great Doctor for his model.’ This was evidently too much for Captain Brown to take placidly ; and I saw the words on the tip of his tongue before Miss Jenkyns had finished her sentence.

‘ It is quite a different sort of thing, my dear madam,’ he began.

‘ I am quite aware of that,’ returned she. ‘ And I make allowances, Captain Brown.’

‘ Just allow me to read you a scene out of this month’s number,’ pleaded he. ‘ I had it only this morning, and I don’t think the company can have read it yet.’

‘As you please,’ said she, settling herself with an air of resignation. He read the account of the ‘swarry’ which Sam Weller gave at Bath. Some of us laughed heartily. I did not dare, because I was staying in the house. Miss Jenkyns sat in patient gravity. When it was ended, she turned to me, and said with mild dignity :

‘Fetch me *Rasselas*, my dear, out of the book-room.’

When I brought it to her, she turned to Captain Brown :

‘Now allow *me* to read you a scene, and then the present company can judge between your favourite, Mr. Boz, and Dr. Johnson.’

She read one of the conversations between *Rasselas* and *Imlac*, in a high-pitched majestic voice ; and when she had ended, she said, ‘I imagine I am now justified in my preference of Dr. Johnson, as a writer of fiction.’ The Captain screwed his lips up, and drummed on the table, but he did not speak. She thought she would give a finishing blow or two.

‘I consider it vulgar, and below the dignity of literature, to publish in numbers.’

‘How was the *Rambler* published, ma’am ?’ asked Captain Brown, in a low voice ; which I think Miss Jenkyns could not have heard.

‘Dr. Johnson’s style is a model for young beginners. My father recommended it to me when I began to write letters.—I have formed my own style upon it ; I recommend it to your favourite.’

‘I should be very sorry for him to exchange his style for any such pompous writing,’ said Captain Brown.

Miss Jenkyns felt this as a personal affront, in

a way of which the Captain had not dreamed. Epistolary writing, she and her friends considered as her *forte*. Many a copy of many a letter have I seen written and corrected on the slate, before she 'seized the half-hour just previous to post-time to assure' her friends of this or of that; and Dr. Johnson was, as she said, her model in these compositions. She drew herself up with dignity, and only replied to Captain Brown's last remark by saying, with marked emphasis on every syllable, 'I prefer Dr. Johnson to Mr. Boz.'

It is said—I won't vouch for the fact—that Captain Brown was heard to say, *sotto voce*, 'D—n Dr. Johnson!' If he did, he was penitent afterwards, as he showed by going to stand near Miss Jenkyns's armchair, and endeavouring to beguile her into conversation on some more pleasing subject. But she was inexorable. The next day, she made the remark I have mentioned, about Miss Jessie's dimples.—*Cranford*.

#### THE REVEREND EBENEZER HOLMAN, MINISTER AND FARMER

'I SUPPOSE, cousin Paul, you have to be very busy at your work all day long in general?'

'Yes, we have to be in the office at half-past eight; and we have an hour for dinner, and then we go at it again till eight or nine.'

'Then you have not much time for reading?'

'No,' said I, with a sudden consciousness that I did not make the most of what leisure I had.

'No more have I. Father always gets an hour before going a-field in the mornings, but mother does not like me to get up so early.'

‘ My mother is always wanting me to get up earlier when I am at home.’

‘ What time do you get up ? ’

‘ Oh !—ah !—sometimes half-past six ; not often, though ’ ; for I remembered only twice that I had done so during the past summer.

She turned her head, and looked at me.

‘ Father is up at three ; and so was mother till she was ill. I should like to be up at four.’

‘ Your father up at three ! Why, what has he to do at that hour ? ’

‘ What has he not to do ? He has his private exercise in his own room ; he always rings the great bell which calls the men to milking ; he rouses up Betty, our maid ; as often as not he gives the horses their feed before the man is up—for Jem, who takes care of the horses, is an old man ; and father is always loath to disturb him ; he looks at the calves, and the shoulders, heels, traces, chaff, and corn, before the horses go a-field ; he has often to whip-cord the plough-whips ; he sees the hogs fed ; he looks into the swill-tubs, and writes his orders for what is wanted for food for man and beast ; yes, and for fuel, too. And then, if he has a bit of time to spare, he comes in and reads with me—but only English ; we keep Latin for the evenings, that we may have time to enjoy it ; and then he calls in the man to breakfast, and cuts the boys’ bread and cheese, and sees their wooden bottles filled, and sends them off to their work ;—and by this time it is half-past six, and we have our breakfast. There is father ! ’ she exclaimed, pointing out to me a man in his shirt-sleeves, taller by the head than the other two with whom he was working. We only saw him through

the leaves of the ash-trees growing in the hedge, and I thought I must be confusing the figures, or mistaken: that man still looked like a very powerful labourer, and had none of the precise demureness of appearance which I had always imagined was the characteristic of a minister. It was the Reverend Ebenezer Holman, however. He gave us a nod as we entered the stubble-field; and I think he would have come to meet us but that he was in the middle of giving some directions to his men. I could see that Phillis was built more after his type than her mother's. He, like his daughter, was largely made, and of a fair, ruddy complexion, whereas hers was brilliant and delicate. His hair had been yellow or sandy, but now was grizzled. Yet his grey hairs betokened no failure in strength. I never saw a more powerful man—deep chest, lean flanks, well-planted head. By this time we were nearly up to him; and he interrupted himself and stepped forwards; holding out his hand to me, but addressing Phillis.

‘Well, my lass, this is cousin Manning, I suppose. Wait a minute, young man, and I’ll put on my coat, and give you a decorous and formal welcome. But——Ned Hall, there ought to be a water-furrow across this land: it’s a nasty, stiff, clayey, dauby bit of ground, and thou and I must fall to, come next Monday—I beg your pardon, cousin Manning—and there’s old Jem’s cottage wants a bit of thatch; you can do that job to-morrow while I am busy.’ Then, suddenly changing the tone of his deep bass voice to an odd suggestion of chapels and preachers, he added, ‘Now, I will give out the psalm, “Come all harmonious tongues,” to be sung to “Mount Ephraim” tune.’

He lifted his spade in his hand, and began to beat time with it; the two labourers seemed to know both words and music, though I did not; and so did Phillis: her rich voice followed her father's as he set the tune; and the men came in with more uncertainty, but still harmoniously. Phillis looked at me once or twice with a little surprise at my silence; but I did not know the words. There we five stood, bareheaded, excepting Phillis, in the tawny stubble-field, from which all the shocks of corn had not yet been carried—a dark wood on one side, where the wood-pigeons were cooing; blue distance seen through the ash-trees on the other. Somehow, I think that if I had known the words, and could have sung, my throat would have been choked up by the feeling of the unaccustomed scene.

The hymn was ended, and the men had drawn off, before I could stir. I saw the minister beginning to put on his coat, and looking at me with friendly inspection in his gaze, before I could rouse myself.

'I dare say you railway gentlemen don't ~~wind up the day~~ with singing a psalm together,' said he; 'but it is not a bad practice—not a bad practice. We have had it a bit earlier to-day for hospitality's sake—that's all.'

I had nothing particular to say to this, though I was thinking a great deal. From time to time I ~~stole a look at~~ my companion. His coat was black, and so was his waistcoat; neck-cloth he had none, his strong full throat being bare above the snow-white shirt. He wore drab-coloured knee-breeches, grey worsted stockings (I thought I knew the maker), and strong-nailed shoes. He carried his hat in his hand, as if he liked to feel the coming

breeze lifting his hair. After a while, I saw that the father took hold of the daughter's hand, and so, they holding each other, went along towards home. We had to cross a lane. In it there were two little children—one lying prone on the grass in a passion of crying; the other standing stock still, with its finger in its mouth, the large tears slowly rolling down its cheeks for sympathy. The cause of their distress was evident; there was a broken brown pitcher, and a little pool of spilt milk on the road.

'Hollo! hollo! What's all this?' said the minister. 'Why, what have you been about, Tommy?' lifting the little petticoated lad, who was lying sobbing, with one vigorous arm. Tommy looked at him with surprise in his round eyes, but no affright—they were evidently old acquaintances.

'Mammy's jug!' said he at last, beginning to cry afresh.

'Well! and will crying piece mammy's jug, or pick up spilt milk? How did you manage it, Tommy?'

'He' (jerking his head at the other) 'and me was running races.'

'Tommy said he could beat me,' put in the other.

'Now, I wonder what will make you two silly lads mind, and not run races again with a pitcher of milk between you,' said the minister, as if musing. 'I might flog you, and so save mammy the trouble; for I dare say she'll do it if I don't.' The fresh burst of whimpering from both showed the probability of this. 'Or I might take you to the Hope Farm, and give you some more milk; but then you'd be running races again, and my

milk would follow that to the ground, and make another white pool. I think the flogging would be best—don't you ? '

' We would never run races no more,' said the elder of the two.

' Then you'd not be boys ; you'd be angels.'

' No, we shouldn't.'

' Why not ? '

They looked into each other's eyes for an answer to this puzzling question. At length, one said, ' Angels is dead folk.'

' Come ; we'll not get too deep into theology. What do you think of my lending you a tin can with a lid, to carry the milk home in ? That would not break, at any rate ; though I would not answer for the milk not spilling if you ran races. That 's it ! '

He had dropped his daughter's hand, and now held out each of his to the little fellows. Phillis and I followed, and listened to the prattle which the minister's companions now poured out to him, and which he was evidently enjoying. At a certain point, there was a sudden burst of the tawny, ruddy evening landscape. The minister turned round and quoted a line or two of Latin.

' It 's wonderful,' said he, ' how exactly Virgil has hit the enduring epithets, nearly two thousand years ago, and in Italy ; and yet how it describes to a T what is now lying before us in the parish of Heathbridge, county ——, England.'

' I dare say it does,' said I, all aglow with shame, for I had forgotten the little Latin I ever knew.

The minister shifted his eyes to Phillis's face ; it mutely gave him back the sympathetic appreciation that I, in my ignorance, could not bestow.

‘ Oh ! this is worse than the catechism,’ thought I ; ‘ that was only remembering words.’

‘ Phillis, lass, thou must go home with these lads, and tell their mother all about the race and the milk. Mammy must always know the truth,’ now speaking to the children. ‘ And tell her, too, from me that I have got the best birch rod in the parish ; and that if she ever thinks her children want a flogging she must bring them to me, and, if I think they deserve it, I’ll give it them better than she can.’ So Phillis led the children towards the dairy, somewhere in the back-yard, and I followed the minister in through the ‘ curate ’ into the house-place.

‘ Their mother,’ said he, ‘ is a bit of a vixen, and apt to punish her children without rhyme or reason. I try to keep the parish rod as well as the parish bull.’

He sat down in the three-cornered chair by the fireside, and looked around the empty room.

‘ Where ’s the missus ? ’ said he to himself. But she was there in a minute ; it was her regular plan to give him his welcome home—by a look, by a touch, nothing more—as soon as she could after his return, and he had missed her now. Regardless of my presence, he went over the day’s doings to her ; and then, getting up, he said he must go and make himself ‘ reverend ’, and that then we would have a cup of tea in the parlour. The parlour was a large room with two casemented windows on the other side of the broad flagged passage leading from the rector-door to the wide staircase, with its shallow, polished oaken steps, on which no carpet was ever laid. The parlour-floor was covered in the middle by a home-made carpeting of needlework

and list. One or two quaint family pictures of the Holman family hung round the walls; the fire-grate and irons were much ornamented with brass; and on a table against the wall between the windows, a great beau-pot of flowers was placed upon the folio volumes of Matthew Henry's Bible. It was a compliment to me to use this room, and I tried to be grateful for it; but we never had our meals there after that first day, and I was glad of it; for the large house-place, living-room, dining-room, whichever you might like to call it, was twice as comfortable and cheerful. There was a rug in front of the great large fireplace, and an oven by the grate, and a crook, with the kettle hanging from it, over the bright wood-fire; everything that ought to be black and polished in that room was black and polished; and the flags, and window-curtains, and such things as were to be white and clean, were just spotless in their purity. Opposite to the fireplace, extending the whole length of the room, was an oaken shovel-board, with the right incline for a skilful player to send the weights into the prescribed space. There were baskets of white work about, and a small shelf of books hung against the wall, books used for reading, and not for propping up a beau-pot of flowers. I took down one or two of those books once when I was left alone in the house-place on the first evening—Virgil, Caesar, a Greek grammar—oh, dear! ah, me! and Phillis Holman's name in each of them! I shut them up, and put them back in their places, and walked as far away from the bookshelf as I could. Yes, and I gave my cousin Phillis a wide berth, although she was sitting at her work quietly enough, and her hair was looking more golden, her

dark eyelashes longer, her round pillar of a throat whiter than ever. We had done tea, and we had returned into the house-place that the minister might smoke his pipe without fear of contaminating the drab damask window-curtains of the parlour. He had made himself 'reverend' by putting on one of the voluminous white muslin neckcloths that I had seen cousin Holman ironing that first visit I had paid to the Hope Farm, and by making one or two other unimportant changes in his dress. He sat looking steadily at me, but whether he saw me or not I cannot tell. At the time I fancied that he did, and was gauging me in some unknown fashion in his secret mind. Every now and then he took his pipe out of his mouth, knocked out the ashes, and asked me some fresh question. As long as these related to my acquirements or my reading, I shuffled uneasily and did not know what to answer. By and by he got round to the more practical subject of railroads, and on this I was more at home. I really had taken an interest in my work; nor would Mr. Holdsworth, indeed, have kept me in his employment if I had not given my mind as well as my time to it; and I was, besides, full of the difficulties which beset us just then, owing to our not being able to find a steady bottom on the Heathbridge moss, over which we wished to carry our line. In the midst of all my eagerness in speaking about this, I could not help being struck with the extreme pertinence of his questions. I do not mean that he did not show ignorance of many of the details of engineering: that was to have been expected; but on the premisses he had got hold of, he thought clearly and reasoned logically. Phillis—so like him as

she was both in body and mind—kept stopping at her work and looking at me, trying to fully understand all that I said. I felt she did ; and perhaps it made me take more pains in using clear expressions, and arranging my words, than I otherwise should.

‘ She shall see I know something worth knowing, though it mayn’t be her dead-and-gone languages,’ thought I.

‘ I see,’ said the minister at length. ‘ I understand it all. You’ve a clear, good head of your own, my lad—choose how you came by it.’

‘ From my father,’ said I proudly. ‘ Have you not heard of his discovery of a new method of shunting ? It was in the *Gazette*. It was patented. I thought every one had heard of Manning’s patent winch.’

‘ We don’t know who invented the alphabet,’ said he, half smiling, and taking up his pipe.

‘ No, I dare say not, sir,’ replied I, half offended ; ‘ that ’s so long ago.’

Puff—puff—puff.

‘ But your father must be a notable man. I heard of him once before ; and it is not many a one fifty miles away whose fame reaches Heath-bridge.’

‘ My father is a notable man, sir. It is not me that says so ; it is Mr. Holdsworth, and—and everybody.’

‘ He is right to stand up for his father,’ said cousin Holman, as if she were pleading for me.

I chafed inwardly, thinking that my father needed no one to stand up for him. He was man sufficient for himself.

‘ Yes—he is right,’ said the minister placidly.

‘Right, because it comes from his heart—right, too, as I believe, in point of fact. Else there is many a young cockerel that will stand upon a dunghill and crow about his father, by way of making his own plumage to shine. I should like to know thy father,’ he went on, turning straight to me, with a kindly, frank look in his eyes.

But I was vexed, and would take no notice. Presently, having finished his pipe, he got up and left the room. Phillis put her work hastily down, and went after him. In a minute or two she returned, and sat down again. Not long after and before I had quite recovered my good temper, he opened the door out of which he had passed, and called to me to come to him. I went across a narrow stone passage into a strange, many-cornered room, not ten feet in area, part study, part counting-house, looking into the farmyard; with a desk to sit at, a desk to stand at, a spittoon, a set of shelves with old divinity books upon them; another, smaller, filled with books on farriery, farming, manures, and such subjects, with pieces of paper containing memoranda stuck against the whitewashed walls with wafers, nails, pins, anything that came readiest to hand; a box of carpenter’s tools on the floor, and some manuscripts in shorthand on the desk.

He turned round, half laughing. ‘That foolish girl of mine thinks I have vexed you’—putting his large, powerful hand on my shoulder. ‘“Nay,” says I; “kindly meant is kindly taken”—is it not so?’

‘It was not quite, sir,’ replied I, vanquished by his manner; ‘but it shall be in future.’

‘Come, that’s right. You and I shall be friends.

Indeed, it 's not many a one I would bring in here. But I was reading a book this morning, and I could not make it out ; it is a book that was left here by mistake one day ; I had subscribed to Brother Robinson's sermons ; and I was glad to see this instead of them, for sermons though they be, they're . . . well, never mind ! I took 'em both, and made my old coat do a bit longer ; but all's fish that comes to my net. I have fewer books than leisure to read them, and I have a prodigious big appetite. Here it is.'

It was a volume of stiff mechanics, involving many technical terms, and some rather deep mathematics. These last, which would have puzzled me, seemed easy enough to him ; all that he wanted was the explanations of the technical words, which I could easily give.

While he was looking through the book to find the places where he had been puzzled, my wandering eye caught on some of the papers on the wall, and I could not help reading one, which has stuck by me ever since. At first, it seemed a kind of weekly diary ; but then I saw that the seven days were portioned out for special prayers and intercessions : Monday for his family, Tuesday for enemies, Wednesday for the Independent churches, Thursday for all other churches, Friday for persons afflicted, Saturday for his own soul, Sunday for all wanderers and sinners, that they might be brought home to the fold.

We were called back into the house-place to have supper. A door opening into the kitchen was opened ; and all stood up in both rooms, while the minister, tall, large, one hand resting on the spread table, the other lifted up, said, in the deep voice

that would have been loud had it not been so full and rich, but with the peculiar accent or twang that I believe is considered devout by some people, 'Whether we eat or drink, or whatsoever we do, let us do all to the glory of God.'

The supper was an immense meat-pie. We of the house-place were helped first; then the minister hit the handle of his buckhorn carving-knife on the table once, and said—

'Now or never,' which meant, did any of us want any more; and when we had all declined, either by silence or by words, he knocked twice with his knife on the table, and Betty came in through the open door, and carried off the great dish to the kitchen, where an old man and a young one, and a help-girl, were awaiting their meal.

'Shut the door, if you will,' said the minister to Betty.

'That 's in honour of you,' said cousin Holman, in a tone of satisfaction, as the door was shut. 'When we've no stranger with us, the minister is so fond of keeping the door open, and talking to the men and maids, just as much as to Phillis and me.'

'It brings us all together, like a household, just before we meet as a household in prayer,' said he in explanation. 'But to go back to what we were talking about—can you tell me of any simple book on dynamics that I could put in my pocket, and study a little at leisure times in the day?'

'Leisure times, father?' said Phillis, with a nearer approach to a smile than I had yet seen on her face.

'Yes; leisure times, daughter. There is many an odd minute lost in waiting for other folk; and

now that railroads are coming so near us, it behoves us to know something about them.'

I thought of his own description of his 'prodigious big appetite' for learning. And he had a good appetite of his own for the more material victual before him. But I saw, or fancied I saw, that he had some rule for himself in the matter both of food and drink.

As soon as supper was done the household assembled for prayer. It was a long impromptu evening prayer; and it would have seemed desultory enough had I not had a glimpse of the kind of day that preceded it, and so been able to find a clue to the thoughts that preceded the disjointed utterances; for he kept there, kneeling down in the centre of a circle, his eyes shut, his outstretched hands pressed palm to palm—sometimes with a long pause of silence, as if waiting to see if there was anything else he wished to 'lay before the Lord' (to use his own expression)—before he concluded with the blessing. He prayed for the cattle and live creatures, rather to my surprise; for my attention had begun to wander, till it was recalled by the familiar words.

And here I must not forget to name an odd incident at the conclusion of the prayer, and before we had risen from our knees (indeed, before Betty was well awake, for she made a nightly practice of having a sound nap, her weary head lying on her stalwart arms); the minister, still kneeling in our midst, but with his eyes wide open, and his arms dropped by his side, spoke to the elder man, who turned round on his knees to attend. 'John, didst see that Daisy had her warm mash to-night; for we must not neglect the means, John—two

quarts of gruel, a spoonful of ginger, and a gill of beer—the poor beast needs it, and I fear it slipped out of my mind to tell thee ; and here was I asking a blessing and neglecting the means, which is a mockery,’ said he, dropping his voice.

Before we went to bed he told me he should see little or nothing more of me during my visit, which was to end on Sunday evening, as he always gave up both Saturday and Sabbath to his work in the ministry. I remembered that the landlord at the inn had told me this on the day when I first inquired about these new relations of mine ; and I did not dislike the opportunity which I saw would be afforded me of becoming more acquainted with cousin Holman and Phillis, though I earnestly hoped that the latter would not attack me on the subject of the dead languages.

I went to bed, and dreamed that I was as tall as cousin Phillis, and had a sudden and miraculous growth of whisker, and a still more miraculous acquaintance with Latin and Greek. Alas ! I wakened up still a short, beardless lad, with ‘ *tempus fugit* ’ for my sole remembrance of the little Latin I had once learnt. While I was dressing, a bright thought came over me : I could question cousin Phillis, instead of her questioning me, and so manage to keep the choice of the subjects of conversation in my own power.

Early as it was, every one had breakfasted, and my basin of bread and milk was put on the oven-top to await my coming down. Every one was gone about their work. The first to come into the house-place was Phillis with a basket of eggs. Faithful to my resolution, I asked—

‘ What are those ? ’

She looked at me for a moment, and then said gravely—‘Potatoes!’

‘No! they are not,’ said I. ‘They are eggs. What do you mean by saying they are potatoes?’

‘What do you mean by asking me what they were, when they were plain to be seen?’ retorted she.

We were both getting a little angry with each other.

‘I don’t know. I wanted to begin to talk to you; and I was afraid you would talk to me about books as you did yesterday. I have not read much; and you and the minister have read so much.’

‘I have not,’ said she. ‘But you are our guest; and mother says I must make it pleasant to you. We won’t talk of books. What must we talk about?’

‘I don’t know. How old are you?’

‘Seventeen last May. How old are you?’

‘I am nineteen. Older than you by nearly two years,’ said I, drawing myself up to my full height.

‘I should not have thought you were above sixteen,’ she replied, as quietly as if she were not saying the most provoking thing she possibly could. Then came a pause.

‘What are you going to do now?’ asked I.

‘I should be dusting the bed-chambers; but mother said I had better stay and make it pleasant to you,’ said she, a little plaintively, as if dusting rooms was far the easiest task.

‘Will you take me to see the live-stock? I like animals, though I don’t know much about them.’

‘Oh, do you? I am so glad. I was afraid you would not like animals, as you did not like books.’

I wondered why she said this. I think it was

because she had begun to fancy all our tastes must be dissimilar. We went together all through the farmyard ; we fed the poultry, she kneeling down with her pinafore full of corn and meal, and tempting the little timid, downy chickens upon it, much to the anxiety of the fussy ruffled hen, their mother. She called to the pigeons, who fluttered down at the sound of her voice. She and I examined the great sleek cart-horses ; sympathized in our dislike of pigs ; fed the calves ; coaxed the sick cow, Daisy ; and admired the others out at pasture ; and came back tired and hungry and dirty at dinner-time, having quite forgotten that there were such things as dead languages, and consequently capital friends.—*Cousin Phillis*.

## DR. JOHN BROWN

1810-82

### RAB AND HIS FRIENDS

FOUR-AND-THIRTY years ago, Bob Ainslie and I were coming up Infirmary Street from the High School, our heads together, and our arms intertwined, as only lovers and boys know how, or why.

When we got to the top of the street, and turned north, we espied a crowd at the Tron Church. 'A dog-fight !' shouted Bob, and was off ; and so was I, both of us all but praying that it might not be over before we got up ! And is not this boy-nature ? and human nature too ? and don't we all wish a house on fire not to be out before we see it ? Dogs like fighting ; old Isaac says they 'delight' in it, and for the best of all reasons ;

and boys are not cruel because they like to see the fight. They see three of the great cardinal virtues of dog or man—courage, endurance, and skill—in intense action. This is very different from a love of making dogs fight, and enjoying, and aggravating, and making gain by their pluck. A boy—be he ever so fond himself of fighting, if he be a good boy, hates and despises all this, but he would have run off with Bob and me fast enough : it is a natural, and a not wicked interest, that all boys and men have in witnessing intense energy in action.

Does any curious and finely-ignorant woman wish to know how Bob's eye at a glance announced a dog-fight to his brain ? He did not, he could not see the dogs fighting ; it was a flash of an inference, a rapid induction. The crowd round a couple of dogs fighting, is a crowd masculine mainly, with an occasional active, compassionate woman, fluttering wildly round the outside, and using her tongue and her hands freely upon the men, as so many ' brutes ' ; it is a crowd annular, compact, and mobile ; a crowd centripetal, having its eyes and its heads all bent downwards and inwards, to one common focus.

Well, Bob and I are up, and find it is not over : a small thoroughbred, white bull-terrier, is busy throttling a large shepherd's dog, unaccustomed to war, but not to be trifled with. They are hard at it ; the scientific little fellow doing his work in great style, his pastoral enemy fighting wildly, but with the sharpest of teeth and a great courage. Science and breeding, however, soon had their own ; the Game Chicken, as the premature Bob called him, working his way up, took his final

grip of poor Yarrow's throat—and he lay gasping and done for. His master, a brown, handsome, big young shepherd from Tweedsmuir, would have liked to have knocked down any man, would 'drink up Esil, or eat a crocodile,' for that part, if he had a chance; it was no use kicking the little dog; that would only make him hold the closer. Many were the means shouted out in mouthfuls, of the best possible ways of ending it. 'Water!' but there was none near, and many cried for it who might have got it from the well at Blackfriar's Wynd. 'Bite the tail!' and a large, vague, benevolent, middle-aged man, more desirous than wise, with some struggle got the bushy end of *Yarrow's* tail into his ample mouth, and bit it with all his might. This was more than enough for the much-enduring, much-perspiring shepherd, who, with a gleam of joy over his broad visage, delivered a terrific facer upon our large, vague, benevolent, middle-aged friend—who went down like a shot.

Still the Chicken holds; death not far off. 'Snuff! a pinch of snuff!' observed a calm, highly-dressed young buck, with an eye-glass in his eye. 'Snuff, indeed!' growled the angry crowd, affronted and glaring. 'Snuff! a pinch of snuff!' again observes the buck, but with more urgency; whereon were produced several open boxes, and from a mull which may have been at Culloden, he took a pinch, knelt down, and presented it to the nose of the Chicken. The laws of physiology and of snuff take their course; the Chicken sneezes, and Yarrow is free!

The young pastoral giant stalks off with Yarrow in his arms—comforting him.

But the Bull Terrier's blood is up, and his soul unsatisfied ; he grips the first dog he meets, and discovering she is not a dog, in Homeric phrase, he makes a brief sort of *amende*, and is off. The boys, with Bob and me at their head, are after him : down Niddry Street he goes, bent on mischief ; up the Cowgate like an arrow—Bob and I, and our small men, panting behind.

There, under the single arch of the South Bridge, is a huge mastiff, sauntering down the middle of the causeway, as if with his hands in his pockets : he is old, grey, brindled, as big as a little Highland bull, and has the Shakespearean dewlaps shaking as he goes.

The Chicken makes straight at him, and fastens on his throat. To our astonishment, the great creature does nothing but stand still, hold himself up, and roar—yes, roar ; a long, serious, remonstrative roar. How is this ? Bob and I are up to them. *He is muzzled !* The bailies had proclaimed a general muzzling, and his master, studying strength and economy mainly, had encompassed his huge jaws in a home-made apparatus, constructed out of the leather of some ancient *breechin*. His mouth was open as far as it could ; his lips curled up in rage—a sort of terrible grin ; his teeth gleaming, ready, from out the darkness ; the strap across his mouth tense as a bowstring ; his whole frame stiff with indignation and surprise ; his roar asking us all round, ‘Did you ever see the like of this ?’ He looked a statue of anger and astonishment, done in Aberdeen granite.

We soon had a crowd : the Chicken held on. ‘A knife !’ cried Bob ; and a cobbler gave him

his knife : you know the kind of knife, worn away obliquely to a point, and always keen. I put its edge to the tense leather ; it ran before it ; and then !—one sudden jerk of that enormous head, a sort of dirty mist about his mouth, no noise—and the bright and fierce little fellow is dropped, limp, and dead. A solemn pause : this was more than any of us had bargained for. I turned the little fellow over, and saw he was quite dead : the mastiff had taken him by the small of the back like a rat, and broken it.

He looked down at his victim appeased, ashamed, and amazed ; snuffed him all over, stared at him, and taking a sudden thought, turned round and trotted off. Bob took the dead dog up, and said, ‘ John, we’ll bury him after tea.’ ‘ Yes,’ said I, and was off after the mastiff. He made up the Cowgate at a rapid swing ; he had forgotten some engagement. He turned up the Candle-maker Row, and stopped at the Harrow Inn.

There was a carrier’s cart ready to start, and a keen, thin, impatient, black-a-vised little man, his hand at his grey horse’s head, looking about angrily for something. ‘ Rab, ye thief !’ said he, aiming a kick at my great friend, who drew cringing up, and avoiding the heavy shoe with more agility than dignity, and watching his master’s eye, slunk dismayed under the cart—his ears down, and as much as he had of tail down too.

What a man this must be—thought I—to whom my tremendous hero turns tail ! The carrier saw the muzzle hanging, cut and useless, from his neck, and I eagerly told him the story, which Bob and I always thought, and still think, Homer, or King David, or Sir Walter, alone were worthy

to rehearse. The severe little man was mitigated, and condescended to say, 'Rab, ma man, puir Rabbie,'—whereupon the stump of a tail rose up, the ears were cocked, the eyes filled, and were comforted; the two friends were reconciled. 'Hupp!' and a stroke of the whip were given to Jess; and off went the three.

Bob and I buried the Game Chicken that night (we had not much of a tea) in the back-green of his house, in Melville Street, No. 17, with considerable gravity and silence; and being at the time in the Iliad, and, like all boys, Trojans, we of course called him Hector.

Six years have passed—a long time for a boy and a dog: Bob Ainslie is off to the wars; I am a medical student, and clerk at Minto House Hospital.

Rab I saw almost every week, on the Wednesday; and we had much pleasant intimacy. I found the way to his heart by frequent scratching of his huge head, and an occasional bone. When I did not notice him he would plant himself straight before me, and stand wagging that bud of a tail, and looking up, with his head a little to the one side. His master I occasionally saw; he used to call me 'Maister John.' but was laconic as any Spartan.

One fine October afternoon, I was leaving the hospital, when I saw the large gate open, and in walked Rab, with that great and easy saunter of his. He looked as if taking general possession of the place; like the Duke of Wellington entering a subdued city, satiated with victory and peace.

After him came Jess, now white from age, with her cart ; and in it a woman carefully wrapped up—the carrier leading the horse anxiously, and looking back. When he saw me, James (for his name was James Noble) made a curt and grotesque ‘boo’, and said, ‘Maister John, this is the mistress ; she’s got a trouble in her breest—some kind o’ an income we’re thinkin’.’

By this time I saw the woman’s face ; she was sitting on a sack filled with straw, with her husband’s plaid round her, and his big-coat, with its large white metal buttons, over her feet.

I never saw a more unforgettable face—pale, serious, *lonely*,<sup>1</sup> delicate, sweet, without being at all what we call fine. She looked sixty, and had on a mutch, white as snow, with its black ribbon ; her silvery, smooth hair setting off her dark-grey eyes—eyes such as one sees only twice or thrice in a lifetime, full of suffering, full also of the overcoming of it : her eyebrows<sup>2</sup> black and delicate, and her mouth firm, patient, and contented, which few mouths ever are.

As I have said, I never saw a more beautiful countenance, or one more subdued to settled quiet. ‘Ailie,’ said James, ‘this is Maister John, the young doctor ; Rab’s freend, ye ken. We often speak aboot you, doctor.’ She smiled, and made a movement, but said nothing ; and prepared to come down, putting her plaid aside and

<sup>1</sup> It is not easy giving this look by one word ; it was expressive of her being so much of her life alone.

<sup>2</sup> . . . . ‘Black brows, they say,  
Become some women best ; so that there be not  
Too much hair there, *but in a semicircle,*  
*Or a half-moon made with a pen.*’

rising. Had Solomon, in all his glory, been handing down the Queen of Sheba at his palace gate, he could not have done it more daintily, more tenderly, more like a gentleman, than did James the Howgate carrier, when he lifted down Ailie his wife. The contrast of his small, swarthy, weather-beaten, keen, worldly face to hers—pale, subdued, and beautiful—was something wonderful. Rab looked on concerned and puzzled, but ready for anything that might turn up—were it to strangle the nurse, the porter, or even me. Ailie and he seemed great friends.

‘As I was sayin’, she’s got a kind o’ trouble in her breest, doctor; wull ye tak’ a look at it?’ We walked into the consulting room, all four; Rab grim and comic, willing to be happy and confidential if cause could be shown, willing also to be the reverse, on the same terms. Ailie sat down, undid her open gown and her lawn handkerchief round her neck, and, without a word, showed me her right breast. I looked at and examined it carefully—she and James watching me, and Rab eyeing all three. What could I say? there it was, that had once been so soft, so shapely, so white, so gracious and bountiful, so ‘full of all blessed conditions’—hard as a stone, a centre of horrid pain, making that pale face, with its grey, lucid, reasonable eyes, and its sweet resolved mouth, express the full measure of suffering overcome. Why was that gentle, modest, sweet woman, clean and loveable, condemned by God to bear such a burden?

I got her away to bed. ‘May Rab and me bide?’ said James. ‘You may; and Rab, if he will behave himself.’ ‘I’s e warrant he’s do that,

doctor'; and in slunk the faithful beast. I wish you could have seen him. There are no such dogs now. He belonged to a lost tribe. As I have said, he was brindled, and grey like Rubislaw granite; his hair short, hard, and close, like a lion's; his body thick-set, like a little bull—a sort of compressed Hercules of a dog. He must have been ninety pounds' weight, at the least; he had a large blunt head; his muzzle black as night, his mouth blacker than any night, a tooth or two—being all he had—gleaming out of his jaws of darkness. His head was scarred with the records of old wounds, a sort of series of fields of battle all over it; one eye out, one ear cropped as close as was Archbishop Leighton's father's; the remaining eye had the power of two; and above it, and in constant communication with it, was a tattered rag of an ear, which was for ever unfurling itself, like an old flag; and then that bud of a tail, about one inch long, if it could in any sense be said to be long, being as broad as long—the mobility, the instantaneousness of that bud were very funny and surprising, and its expressive twinklings and winkings, the inter-communications between the eye, the ear, and it, were of the oddest and swiftest.

Rab had the dignity and simplicity of great size; and having fought his way all along the road to absolute supremacy, he was as mighty in his own line as Julius Caesar or the Duke of Wellington, and had the gravity<sup>1</sup> of all great fighters.

<sup>1</sup> A Highland game-keeper, when asked why a certain terrier, of singular pluck, was so much more solemn than the other dogs, said, 'Oh, Sir, life's full o' sariousness to him—he just never can get eneuch o' fechtin'.'

You must have often observed the likeness of certain men to certain animals, and of certain dogs to men. Now, I never look at Rab without thinking of the great Baptist preacher, Andrew Fuller.<sup>1</sup> The same large, heavy, menacing, combative, sombre, honest countenance, the same deep inevitable eye, the same look, as of thunder asleep, but ready—neither a dog nor a man to be trifled with.

Next day, my master, the surgeon, examined Ailie. There was no doubt it must kill her, and soon. It could be removed—it might never return—it would give her speedy relief—she should have it done. She curtsied, looked at James, and said, ‘When?’ ‘To-morrow,’ said the kind surgeon—a man of few words. She and James and Rab and I retired. I noticed that he and she spoke little, but seemed to anticipate everything in each other. The following day, at noon, the students came in, hurrying up the great stair. At the first landing-place, on a small well-known black board, was a bit of paper fastened

<sup>1</sup> Fuller was, in early life, when a farmer lad at Soham, famous as a boxer; not quarrelsome, but not without ‘the stern delight’ a man of strength and courage feels in their exercise. Dr. Charles Stewart of Duncarn, whose rare gifts and graces as a physician, a divine, a scholar, and a gentleman, live only in the memory of those few who knew and survive him, liked to tell how Mr. Fuller used to say, that when he was in the pulpit, and saw a *buirdly* man come along the passage, he would instinctively draw himself up, measure his imaginary antagonist, and forecast how he would deal with him, his hands meanwhile condensing into fists, and tending to ‘square’. He must have been a hard hitter if he boxed as he preached—what ‘The Fancy’ would call ‘an ugly customer’.

by wafers, and many remains of old wafers beside it. On the paper were the words—‘An operation to-day.—J. B. Clerk.’

Up ran the youths, eager to secure good places : in they crowded, full of interest and talk. ‘What’s the case ?’ ‘Which side is it ?’

Don’t think them heartless ; they are neither better nor worse than you or I : they get over their professional horrors, and into their proper work ; and in them pity, as an *emotion*, ending in itself or at best in tears and a long-drawn breath, lessens—while pity, as a *motive*, is quickened, and gains power and purpose. It is well for poor human nature that it is so.

The operating theatre is crowded ; much talk and fun, and all the cordiality and stir of youth. The surgeon with his staff of assistants is there. In comes Ailie ; one look at her quiets and abates the eager students. That beautiful old woman is too much for them ; they sit down, and are dumb, and gaze at her. These rough boys feel the power of her presence. She walks in quickly, but without haste ; dressed in her mutch, her neckerchief, her white dimity short-gown, her black bombazeen petticoat, showing her white worsted stockings and her carpet shoes. Behind her was James with Rab. James sat down in the distance, and took that huge and noble head between his knees. Rab looked perplexed and dangerous ; for ever cocking his ear and dropping it as fast.

Ailie stepped up on a seat, and laid herself on the table, as her friend the surgeon told her ; arranged herself, gave a rapid look at James, shut her eyes, rested herself on me, and took my

hand. The operation was at once begun ; it was necessarily slow ; and chloroform—one of God's best gifts to his suffering children—was then unknown. The surgeon did his work. The pale face showed its pain, but was still and silent. Rab's soul was working within him ; he saw that something strange was going on—blood flowing from his mistress, and she suffering ; his ragged ear was up, and importunate ; he growled and gave now and then a sharp impatient yelp ; he would have liked to have done something to that man. But James had him firm, and gave him a *glower* from time to time, and an intimation of a possible kick ;—all the better for James, it kept his eye and his mind off Ailie.

It is over : she is dressed, steps gently and decently down from the table, looks for James ; then turning to the surgeon and the students, she curtsies—and in a low, clear voice, begs their pardon if she has behaved ill. The students—all of us—wept like children ; the surgeon hopped her up carefully—and, resting on James and me, Ailie went to her room, Rab following. We put her to bed. James took off his heavy shoes, crammed with tackets, heel-capt and toe-capt, and put them carefully under the table, saying, 'Maister John, I'm for nane o' yer stryngie nurse bodies for Ailie. I'll be her nurse, and I'll gang aboot on my stockin' soles as canny as pussy.' And so he did ; and handy and clever, and swift and tender as any woman, was that hornyhanded, snell, peremptory little man. Everything she got he gave her : he seldom slept ; and often I saw his small shrewd eyes out of the darkness, fixed on her. As before, they spoke little.

Rab behaved well, never moving, showing us how meek and gentle he could be, and occasionally, in his sleep, letting us know that he was demolishing some adversary. He took a walk with me every day, generally to the Candlemaker Row; but he was sombre and mild; declined doing battle, though some fit cases offered, and indeed submitted to sundry indignities; and was always very ready to turn, and came faster back, and trotted up the stair with much lightness, and went straight to that door.

Jess, the mare, had been sent, with her weather-worn cart, to Howgate, and had doubtless her own dim and placid meditations and confusions, on the absence of her master and Rab, and her unnatural freedom from the road and her cart.

For some days Ailie did well. The wound healed 'by the first intention'; for as James said, 'Oor Ailie's skin's ower clean to beil.' The students came in quiet and anxious, and surrounded her bed. She said she liked to see their young, honest faces. The surgeon dressed her, and spoke to her in his own short kind way, pitying her through his eyes, Rab and James outside the circle—Rab being now reconciled, and even cordial, and having made up his mind that as yet nobody required worrying, but, as you may suppose, *semper paratus*.

So far well: but, four days after the operation, my patient had a sudden and long shivering, a 'groosin', as she called it. I saw her soon after; her eyes were too bright, her cheeks coloured; she was restless, and ashamed of being so; the balance was lost; mischief had begun. On looking at the wound, a blush of red told the secret;

her pulse was rapid, her breathing anxious and quick, she wasn't herself, as she said, and was vexed at her restlessness. We tried what we could. James did everything, was everywhere; never in the way, never out of it; Rab subsided under the table into a dark place, and was motionless, all but his eye, which followed every one. Ailie got worse; began to wander in her mind, gently; was more demonstrative in her ways to James, rapid in her questions, and sharp at times. He was vexed, and said, 'She was never that way afore, no, never.' For a time she knew her head was wrong, and was always asking our pardon—the dear gentle old woman: then delirium set in strong, without pause. Her brain gave way, and then came that terrible spectacle.

The intellectual power, through words and things,  
Went sounding on, a dim and perilous way;

she sang bits of old songs and Psalms, stopping suddenly, mingling the Psalms of David, and the diviner words of his Son and Lord, with homely odds and ends and scraps of ballads.

Nothing more touching, or in a sense more strangely beautiful, did I ever witness. Her tremulous, rapid, affectionate, eager, Scotch voice—the swift, aimless, bewildered mind, the baffled utterance, the bright and perilous eye; some wild words, some household cares, something for James, the names of the dead, Rab called rapidly and in a 'fremyt' voice, and he starting up, surprised, and slinking off as if he were to blame somehow, or had been dreaming he heard. Many eager questions and beseechings which James and I could make nothing of, and on which she seemed to set her all, and then sink back

ununderstood. It was very sad, but better than many things that are not called sad. James hovered about, put out and miserable, but active and exact as ever; read to her, when there was a lull, short bits from the Psalms, prose and metre, chanting the latter in his own rude and serious way, showing great knowledge of the fit words, bearing up like a man, and doating over her as his 'ain Ailie'. 'Ailie, ma woman!' 'Ma ain bonnie wee dawtie!'

The end was drawing on: the golden bowl was breaking; the silver cord was fast being loosed—that *animula, blandula, vagula, hospes, comesque*, was about to flee. The body and the soul—companions for sixty years—were being sundered, and taking leave. She was walking, alone, through the valley of that shadow, into which one day we must all enter—and yet she was not alone, for we know whose rod and staff were comforting her.

One night she had fallen quiet, and as we hoped, asleep; her eyes were shut. We put down the gas, and sat watching her. Suddenly she sat up in bed, and taking a bed-gown which was lying on it rolled up, she held it eagerly to her breast—to the right side. We could see her eyes bright with a surprising tenderness and joy, bending over this bundle of clothes. She held it as a woman holds her sucking child; opening out her night-gown impatiently, and holding it close, and brooding over it, and murmuring foolish little words, as over one whom his mother comforteth, and who sucks and is satisfied. It was pitiful and strange to see her wasted dying look, keen and yet vague—her immense love.

'Preserve me!' groaned James, giving way.

And then she rocked back and forward, as if to make it sleep, hushing it, and wasting on it her infinite fondness. 'Wae's me, doctor; I declare she's thinkin' it's that bairn.' 'What bairn?' 'The only bairn we ever had; our wee Mysie, and she's in the Kingdom forty years and mair.' It was plainly true: the pain in the breast, telling its urgent story to a bewildered, ruined brain, was misread and mistaken; it suggested to her the uneasiness of a breast full of milk, and then the child; and so again once more they were together, and she had her ain wee Mysie in her bosom.

This was the close. She sank rapidly: the delirium left her; but, as she whispered, she was 'clean silly'; it was the lightening before the final darkness. After having for some time lain still—her eyes shut, she said, 'James!' He came close to her, and lifting up her calm, clear, beautiful eyes, she gave him a long look, turned to me kindly but shortly, looked for Rab but could not see him, then turned to her husband again, as if she would never leave off looking, shut her eyes and composed herself. She lay for some time breathing quick, and passed away so gently, that when we thought she was gone, James, in his old-fashioned way, held the mirror to her face. After a long pause, one small spot of dimness was breathed out; it vanished away, and never returned, leaving the blank clear darkness without a stain. 'What is our life? it is even a vapour, which appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away.'

Rab all this time had been full awake and motionless: he came forward beside us: Ailie's hand, which James had held, was hanging down;

it was soaked with his tears ; Rab licked it all over carefully, looked at her, and returned to his place under the table.

James and I sat, I don't know how long, but for some time—saying nothing ; he started up abruptly, and with some noise went to the table, and putting his right fore and middle fingers each into a shoe, pulled them out, and put them on, breaking one of the leather latches, and muttering in anger, ' I never did the like o' that afore ! '

I believe he never did ; nor after either. ' Rab ! ' he said roughly, and pointing with his thumb to the bottom of the bed. Rab leapt up, and settled himself ; his head and eye to the dead face. ' Maister John, ye'll wait for me,' said the carrier ; and disappeared in the darkness, thundering down stairs in his heavy shoes. I ran to a front window : there he was, already round the house, and out at the gate, fleeing like a shadow.

I was afraid about him, and yet not afraid ; so I sat down beside Rab, and being wearied, fell asleep. I awoke from a sudden noise outside. It was November, and there had been a heavy fall of snow. Rab was *in statu quo* ; he heard the noise too, and plainly knew it, but never moved. I looked out ; and there, at the gate, in the dim morning—for the sun was not up, was Jess and the cart—a cloud of steam rising from the old mare. I did not see James ; he was already at the door, and came up the stairs and met me. It was less than three hours since he left, and he must have posted out—who knows how?—to Howgate, full nine miles off ; yoked Jess, and driven her astonished into town. He had an armful of blankets, and was streaming with

perspiration. He nodded to me, spread out on the floor two pairs of clean old blankets having at their corners, 'A. G., 1794,' in large letters in red worsted. These were the initials of Alison Graeme, and James may have looked in at her from without—himself unseen but not unthought of—when he was 'wat, wat, and weary', and after having walked many a mile over the hills, may have seen her sitting, while 'a' the lave were sleepin', and by the firelight working her name on the blankets, for her ain James's bed.

He motioned Rab down, and taking his wife in his arms, laid her in the blankets, and happed her carefully and firmly up, leaving the face uncovered; and then lifting her, he nodded again sharply to me, and with a resolved but utterly miserable face, strode along the passage, and downstairs, followed by Rab. I followed with a light; but he didn't need it. I went out, holding stupidly the candle in my hand in the calm frosty air; we were soon at the gate. I could have helped him, but I saw he was not to be meddled with, and he was strong, and did not need it. He laid her down as tenderly, as safely, as he had lifted her out ten days before—as tenderly as when he had her first in his arms when she was only 'A. G.'—sorted her, leaving that beautiful sealed face open to the heavens; and then taking Jess by the head, he moved away. He did not notice me, neither did Rab, who presided behind the cart.

I stood till they passed through the long shadow of the College, and turned up Nicolson Street. I heard the solitary cart sound through the streets, and die away and come again; and I returned,

thinking of that company going up Libberton Brae, then along Roslin Muir, the morning light touching the Pentlands, and making them like on-looking ghosts; then down the hill through Auchindinny woods, past 'haunted Woodhouselee'; and as daybreak came sweeping up the bleak Lammermuirs, and fell on his own door, the company would stop, and James would take the key, and lift Ailie up again, laying her on her own bed, and, having put Jess up, would return with Rab and shut the door.

James buried his wife, with his neighbours mourning, Rab watching the proceedings from a distance. It was snow, and that black ragged hole would look strange in the midst of the swelling spotless cushion of white. James looked after everything; then rather suddenly fell ill, and took to bed; was insensible when the doctor came, and soon died. A sort of low fever was prevailing in the village, and his want of sleep, his exhaustion, and his misery made him apt to take it. The grave was not difficult to re-open. A fresh fall of snow had again made all things white and smooth; Rab once more looked on, and slunk home to the stable.

And what of Rab? I asked for him next week at the new carrier who got the goodwill of James's business and was now master of Jess and her cart. 'How's Rab?' He put me off, and said rather rudely, 'What's *your* business wi' the dowg?' I was not to be so put off. 'Where's Rab?' He, getting confused and red, and intermeddling with his hair, said, 'Deed, sir, Rab's deid.' 'Dead! what did he die of?' 'Weel, sir,'

said he, getting redder, 'he didna exactly dee; he was killed. I had to brain him wi' a rack-pin; there was nae doin' wi' him. He lay in the treviss wi' the mear, and wadna come oot. I tem-pit him wi' kail and meat, but he wad tak naething, and keepit me frae feedin' the beast, and he was aye gur gurrin', and grup gruppin' me by the legs. I was laith to mak' awa wi' the auld dowg, his like wasna atween this and Thornhill—but, 'deed, sir, I could do naething else.' I believed him. Fit end for Rab, quick and complete. His teeth and his friends gone, why should he keep the peace, and be civil?

He was buried in the braeface, near the burn, the children of the village, his companions, who used to make very free with him and sit on his ample stomach, as he lay half asleep at the door in the sun, watching the solemnity.—*Horae Subsecivae*.

## WILLIAM MAKEPEACE THACKERAY

1811-63

BECKY SHARP

(i) ANTECEDENTS

MISS SHARP'S father was an artist, and in that quality had given lessons of drawing at Miss Pinkerton's school. He was a clever man; a pleasant companion; a careless student; with a great propensity for running into debt, and a partiality for the tavern. When he was drunk, he used to beat his wife and daughter; and the next morning,

with a headache, he would rail at the world for its neglect of his genius, and abuse, with a good deal of cleverness, and sometimes with perfect reason, the fools, his brother painters. As it was with the utmost difficulty that he could keep himself, and as he owed money for a mile round Soho, where he lived, he thought to better his circumstances by marrying a young woman of the French nation, who was by profession an opera girl. The humble calling of her female parent, Miss Sharp never alluded to, but used to state subsequently that the Entrechats were a noble family of Gascony, and took great pride in her descent from them. And curious it is, that as she advanced in life this young lady's ancestors increased in rank and splendour.

Rebecca's mother had had some education somewhere, and her daughter spoke French with purity and a Parisian accent. It was in those days rather a rare accomplishment, and led to her engagement with the orthodox Miss Pinkerton. For her mother being dead, and her father finding himself not likely to recover, after his third attack of *delirium tremens*, wrote a manly and pathetic letter to Miss Pinkerton, recommending the orphan child to her protection, and so descended to the grave, after two bailiffs had quarrelled over his corpse. Rebecca was seventeen when she came to Chiswick, and was bound over as an articulated pupil ; her duties being to talk French, as we have seen, and her privileges to live cost free ; and, with a few guineas a year, to gather scraps of knowledge from the professors who attended the school.

She was small and slight in person ; pale, sandy-haired, and with eyes habitually cast down : when

they looked up they were very large, odd, and attractive; so attractive, that the Reverend Mr. Crisp, fresh from Oxford, and curate to the Vicar of Chiswick, the Reverend Mr. Flowerdew, fell in love with Miss Sharp; being shot dead by a glance of her eyes which was fired all the way across Chiswick Church from the school-pew to the reading-desk. This infatuated young man used sometimes to take tea with Miss Pinkerton, to whom he had been presented by his mamma, and actually proposed something like marriage in an intercepted note, which the one-eyed apple-woman was charged to deliver. Mrs. Crisp was summoned from Buxton, and abruptly carried off her darling boy; but the idea, even, of such an eagle in the Chiswick dovecot caused a great flutter in the breast of Miss Pinkerton, who would have sent away Miss Sharp, but that she was bound to her under a forfeit, and who never could thoroughly believe the young lady's protestations that she had never exchanged a single word with Mr. Crisp, except under her own eyes on the two occasions when she had met him at tea.

By the side of many tall and bouncing young ladies in the establishment, Rebecca Sharp looked like a child. But she had the dismal precocity of poverty. Many a dun had she talked to, and turned away from her father's door; many a tradesman had she coaxed and wheedled into good-humour, and into the granting of one meal more. She sat commonly with her father, who was very proud of her wit, and heard the talk of many of his wild companions—often but ill suited for a girl to hear. But she never had been a girl, she said; she had been a woman since she was eight years old.

Oh, why did Miss Pinkerton let such a dangerous bird into her cage ?

The fact is, the old lady believed Rebecca to be the meekest creature in the world, so admirably, on the occasions when her father brought her to Chiswick, used Rebecca to perform the part of the *ingénue*. She thought her a modest and innocent little child ; and only a year before the arrangement by which Rebecca had been admitted into her house, and when Rebecca was sixteen years old, Miss Pinkerton majestically, and with a little speech, made her a present of a doll—which was, by the way, the confiscated property of Miss Swindle, discovered surreptitiously nursing it in school hours. How the father and daughter laughed as they trudged home together after the evening party (it was on the occasion of the speeches, when all the professors were invited), and how Miss Pinkerton would have raged had she seen the caricature of herself which the little mimic, Rebecca, managed to make out of her doll. Becky used to go through dialogues with it ; it formed the delight of Newman Street, Gerard Street, and the artists' quarter : and the young painters, when they came to take their gin-and-water with their lazy, dissolute, clever, jovial senior, used regularly to ask Rebecca if Miss Pinkerton was at home : she was as well known to them, poor soul ! as Mr. Lawrence or President West. Once she had the honour to pass a few days at Chiswick ; after which she brought back Jemima, and erected another doll as Miss Jemmy ; for though that honest creature had made and given her jelly and cake enough for three children, and a seven-shilling piece at parting, the girl's sense of ridicule was far

stronger than her gratitude, and she sacrificed Miss Jemmy quite as pitilessly as her sister.

The catastrophe came, and she was brought to the Mall as to her home. The rigid formality of the place suffocated her : the prayers and the meals, the lessons and the walks, which were arranged with a conventual regularity, oppressed her almost beyond endurance : and she looked back to the freedom and the beggary of the old studio in Soho with so much regret, that everybody, herself included, fancied she was consumed with grief for her father. She had a little room in the garret, where the maids heard her walking and sobbing at night ; but it was with rage, and not with grief. She had not been much of a dissembler, until now her loneliness taught her to feign. She had never mingled in the society of women : her father, reprobate as he was, was a man of talent ; his conversation was a thousand times more agreeable to her than the talk of such of her own sex as she now encountered. The pompous vanity of the old schoolmistress, the foolish good-humour of her sister, the silly chat and scandal of the elder girls, and the frigid correctness of the governesses equally annoyed her ; and she had no soft maternal heart, this unlucky girl, otherwise the prattle and talk of the younger children, with whose care she was chiefly entrusted, might have soothed and interested her ; but she lived among them two years, and not one was sorry that she went away. The gentle tender-hearted Amelia Sedley was the only person to whom she could attach herself in the least ; and who could help attaching herself to Amelia ?

The happiness—the superior advantages of the

young women round about her, gave Rebecca inexpressible pangs of envy. 'What airs that girl gives herself, because she is an Earl's granddaughter,' she said of one. 'How they cringe and bow to that Creole, because of her hundred thousand pounds! I am a thousand times cleverer and more charming than that creature, for all her wealth. I am as well bred as the Earl's granddaughter, for all her fine pedigree; and yet every one passes me by here. And yet, when I was at my father's, did not the men give up their gayest balls and parties in order to pass the evening with me?' She determined at any rate to get free from the prison in which she found herself, and now began to act for herself, and for the first time to make connected plans for the future.

She took advantage, therefore, of the means of study the place offered her; and as she was already a musician and a good linguist, she speedily went through the little course of study which was considered necessary for ladies in those days. Her music she practised incessantly, and one day, when the girls were out, and she had remained at home, she was overheard to play a piece so well, that Minerva thought wisely, she could spare herself the expense of a master for the juniors, and intimated to Miss Sharp that she was to instruct them in music for the future.

The girl refused; and for the first time, and to the astonishment of the majestic mistress of the school. 'I am here to speak French with the children,' Rebecca said abruptly, 'not to teach them music, and save money for you. Give me money, and I will teach them.'

Minerva was obliged to yield, and, of course,

disliked her from that day. 'For five-and-thirty years,' she said, and with great justice, 'I never have seen the individual who has dared in my own house to question my authority. I have nourished a viper in my bosom.'

'A viper—a fiddlestick,' said Miss Sharp to the old lady, almost fainting with astonishment. 'You took me because I was useful. There is no question of gratitude between us. I hate this place, and want to leave it. I will do nothing here, but what I am obliged to do.'

It was in vain that the old lady asked her if she was aware she was speaking to Miss Pinkerton? Rebecca laughed in her face, with a horrid sarcastic demoniacal laughter, that almost sent the schoolmistress into fits. 'Give me a sum of money,' said the girl, 'and get rid of me—or, if you like better, get me a good place as governess in a nobleman's family—you can do so if you please.' And in their further disputes she always returned to this point, 'Get me a situation—we hate each other, and I am ready to go.'

Worthy Miss Pinkerton, although she had a Roman nose and turban, and was as tall as a grenadier, and had been up to this time an irresistible princess, had no will or strength like that of her little apprentice, and in vain did battle against her, and tried to overawe her. Attempting once to scold her in public, Rebecca hit upon the before-mentioned plan of answering her in French, which quite routed the old woman. In order to maintain authority in her school, it became necessary to remove this rebel, this monster, this serpent, this firebrand; and hearing about this time that Sir Pitt Crawley's family was in want of a governess,

she actually recommended Miss Sharp for the situation, firebrand and serpent as she was. 'I cannot, certainly,' she said, 'find fault with Miss Sharp's conduct, except to myself; and must allow that her talents and accomplishments are of a high order. As far as the head goes, at least, she does credit to the educational system pursued at my establishment.'

And so the schoolmistress reconciled the recommendation to her conscience, and the indentures were cancelled, and the apprentice was free. The battle here described in a few lines, of course, lasted for some months. And as Miss Sedley, being now in her seventeenth year, was about to leave school, and had a friendship for Miss Sharp (''tis the only point in Amelia's behaviour,' said Minerva, 'which has not been satisfactory to her mistress'), Miss Sharp was invited by her friend to pass a week with her at home, before she entered upon her duties as governess in a private family.

Thus the world began for these two young ladies. For Amelia it was quite a new, fresh, brilliant world, with all the bloom upon it. It was not quite a new one for Rebecca (indeed, if the truth must be told with respect to the Crisp affair, the tart-woman hinted to somebody who took an affidavit of the fact to somebody else, that there was a great deal more than was made public regarding Mr. Crisp and Miss Sharp, and that his letter was *in answer* to another letter). But who can tell you the real truth of the matter? At all events, if Rebecca was not beginning the world, she was beginning it over again.

## (ii) SIR PITT TOO LATE

The news of Lady Crawley's death provoked no more grief or comment than might have been expected in Miss Crawley's family circle. 'I suppose I must put off my party for the 3rd,' Miss Crawley said; and added, after a pause, 'I hope my brother will have the decency not to marry again.' 'What a confounded rage Pitt will be in if he does!' Rawdon remarked, with his usual regard for his elder brother. Rebecca said nothing. She seemed by far the gravest and most impressed of the family. She left the room before Rawdon went away that day; but they met by chance below, as he was going away after taking leave, and had a parley together.

On the morrow, as Rebecca was gazing from the window, she startled Miss Crawley, who was placidly occupied with a French novel, by crying out in an alarmed tone, 'Here's Sir Pitt, ma'am!' and the Baronet's knock followed this announcement.

'My dear, I can't see him. I won't see him. Tell Bowls not at home, or go downstairs and say I'm too ill to receive any one. My nerves really won't bear my brother at this moment,' cried out Miss Crawley, and resumed the novel.

'She's too ill to see you, sir,' Rebecca said, tripping down to Sir Pitt, who was preparing to ascend.

'So much the better,' Sir Pitt answered. 'I want to see *you*, Miss Becky. Come along a me into the parlour,' and they entered that apartment together.

'I wawnt you back at Queen's Crawley, miss,'

the baronet said, fixing his eyes upon her, and taking off his black gloves and his hat with its great crape hatband. His eyes had such a strange look, and fixed upon her so stedfastly, that Rebecca Sharp began almost to tremble.

‘I hope to come soon,’ she said in a low voice, ‘as soon as Miss Crawley is better—and return to—to the dear children.’

‘You’ve said so these three months, Becky,’ replied Sir Pitt, ‘and still you go hanging on to my sister, who’ll fling you off like an old shoe when she’s wore you out. I tell you I *want* you. I’m going back to the veneral. Will you come back? Yes or no?’

‘I daren’t—I don’t think—it would be right—to be alone—with you, sir,’ Becky said, seemingly in great agitation.

‘I say agin, I want you,’ Sir Pitt said, thumping the table. ‘I can’t git on without you. I didn’t see what it was till you went away. The house all goes wrong. It’s not the same place. All my accounts has got muddled agin. You *must* come back. Do come back. Dear Becky, do come.’

‘Come—as what, sir?’ Rebecca gasped out.

‘Come as Lady Crawley, if you like,’ the baronet said, grasping his crape hat. ‘There! will that zatusfy you? Come back and be my wife. Your vit vor’t. Birth be hanged. You’re as good a lady as ever I see. You’ve got more brains in your little vinger than any baronet’s wife in the county. Will you come? Yes or no?’

‘Oh, Sir Pitt!’ Rebecca said, very much moved.

‘Say yes, Becky,’ Sir Pitt continued. ‘I’m an old man, but a good ’n. I’m good for twenty years. I’ll make you happy, zee if I don’t. You shall do

what you like ; spend what you like ; and 'av it all your own way. I'll make you a zettlement. I'll do everything reg'lar. Look year ! ' and the old man fell down on his knees and leered at her like a satyr.

Rebecca started back a picture of consternation. In the course of this history we have never seen her lose her presence of mind ; but she did now, and wept some of the most genuine tears that ever fell from her eyes.

' Oh, Sir Pitt ! ' she said. ' Oh, sir—I—I'm *married already*.'—*Vanity Fair*.

### (iii) A RESCUE AND A CATASTROPHE

Friend Rawdon drove on then to Mr. Moss's mansion in Cursitor Street, and was duly inducted into that dismal place of hospitality. Morning was breaking over the cheerful house-tops of Chancery Lane as the rattling cab woke up the echoes there. A little pink-eyed Jew-boy, with a head as ruddy as the rising morn, let the party into the house, and Rawdon was welcomed to the ground-floor apartments by Mr. Moss, his travelling companion and host, who cheerfully asked him if he would like a glass of something warm after his drive.

The colonel was not so depressed as some mortals would be, who, quitting a palace and a *placens uxor*, find themselves barred into a spunging-house, for, if the truth must be told, he had been a lodger at Mr. Moss's establishment once or twice before. We have not thought it necessary in the previous course of this narrative to mention these trivial little domestic incidents : but the reader may be assured that they can't

unfrequently occur in the life of a man who lives on nothing a year.

Upon his first visit to Mr. Moss, the colonel, then a bachelor, had been liberated by the generosity of his aunt; on the second mishap, little Becky, with the greatest spirit and kindness, had borrowed a sum of money from Lord Southdown, and had coaxed her husband's creditor (who was her shawl, velvet-gown, lace pocket-handkerchief, trinket, and gimcrack purveyor, indeed) to take a portion of the sum claimed, and Rawdon's promissory note for the remainder: so on both these occasions the capture and release had been conducted with the utmost gallantry on all sides, and Moss and the colonel were therefore on the very best of terms.

'You'll find your old bed, colonel, and everything comfortable,' that gentleman said, 'as I may honestly say. You may be pretty sure its kep aired, and by the best of company, too. It was slep in the night afore last by the Honourable Capting Famish, of the Fiftieth Dragoons, whose mar took him out, after a fortnight, jest to punish him, she said. But, Law bless you, I promise you, he punished my champagne, and had a party ere every night—reglar tip-top swells, down from the clubs and the West End—Capting Ragg, the Honourable Deuceace, who lives in the Temple, and some fellers as knows a good glass of wine, I warrant you. I've got a Doctor of Diwinity upstairs, five gents in the coffee-room, and Mrs. Moss has a tably-dy-hoty at half-past five, and a little cards or music afterwards, when we shall be most happy to see you.'

'I'll ring, when I want anything,' said Rawdon,

and went quietly to his bedroom. He was an old soldier, we have said, and not to be disturbed by any little shocks of fate. A weaker man would have sent off a letter to his wife on the instant of his capture. 'But what is the use of disturbing her night's rest?' thought Rawdon. 'She won't know whether I am in my room or not. It will be time enough to write to her when she has had her sleep out, and I have had mine. It's only a hundred-and-seventy, and the deuce is in it if we can't raise that.' And so, thinking about little Rawdon (whom he would not have known that he was in such a queer place), the colonel turned into the bed lately occupied by Captain Famish, and fell asleep. It was ten o'clock when he woke up, and the ruddy-headed youth brought him, with conscious pride, a fine silver dressing-case, wherewith he might perform the operation of shaving. Indeed Mr. Moss's house, though somewhat dirty, was splendid throughout. There were dirty trays, and wine-coolers *en permanence* on the sideboard, huge dirty gilt cornices, with dingy yellow satin hangings to the barred windows which looked into Cursitor Street—vast and dirty gilt picture-frames surrounding pieces sporting and sacred, all of which works were by the greatest masters; and fetched the greatest prices, too, in the bill transactions, in the course of which they were sold and bought over and over again. The colonel's breakfast was served to him in the same dingy and gorgeous plated ware. Miss Moss, a dark-eyed maid in curl-papers, appeared with the teapot, and, smiling, asked the colonel how he had slept? and she brought him in the *Morning Post*, with the names of all the great people who

had figured at Lord Steyne's entertainment the night before. It contained a brilliant account of the festivities, and of the beautiful and accomplished Mrs. Rawdon Crawley's admirable personifications.

After a lively chat with this lady (who sat on the edge of the breakfast-table in an easy attitude displaying the drapery of her stocking and an ex-white satin shoe, which was down at heel), Colonel Crawley called for pens and ink, and paper; and being asked how many sheets, chose one which was brought to him between Miss Moss's own finger and thumb. Many a sheet had that dark-eyed damsel brought in; many a poor fellow had scrawled and blotted hurried lines of entreaty, and paced up and down that awful room until his messenger brought back the reply. Poor men always use messengers instead of the post. Who has not had their letters with the wafers wet, and the announcement that a person is waiting in the hall?

Now on the score of his application, Rawdon had not many misgivings.

DEAR BECKY (Rawdon wrote), *I hope you slept well. Don't be frightened if I don't bring you in your coffy. Last night as I was coming home smoaking, I met with an accident. I was nabbed by Moss of Cursitor Street—from whose gilt and splendid parlor I write this—the same that had me this time two years. Miss Moss brought in my tea—she is grown very fat, and as usual, had her stockens down at heal.*

It's Nathan's business—a hundred-and-fifty—with costs hundred-and-seventy. Please send me my desk and some cloths—I'm in pumps and a white tye (something like Miss M.'s stockings)—I've seventy in it. And as soon as you get this, Drive to Nathan's—offer him seventy-five down and ask *him to renew*—say I'll take

wine—we may as well have some dinner sherry ; but not *pictures*, they're too dear.

If he won't stand it. Take my ticker and such of your things as you can *spare*, and send them to Balls—we must, of course, have the sum to-night. It won't do to let it stand over, as to-morrow's Sunday ; the beds here are not very *clean*, and there may be other things out against me—I'm glad it an't Rawdon's Saturday for coming home. God bless you.

Yours in haste, R. C.

PS.—Make haste and come.

This letter, sealed with a wafer, was dispatched by one of the messengers who are always hanging about Mr. Moss's establishment ; and Rawdon, having seen him depart, went out in the courtyard, and smoked his cigar with a tolerably easy mind—in spite of the bars overhead ; for Mr. Moss's courtyard is railed in like a cage, lest the gentlemen who are boarding with him should take a fancy to escape from his hospitality.

Three hours, he calculated, would be the utmost time required, before Becky should arrive and open his prison doors : and he passed these pretty cheerfully in smoking, in reading the paper, and in the coffee-room with an acquaintance, Captain Walker, who happened to be there, and with whom he cut for sixpences for some hours, with pretty equal luck on either side.

But the day passed away and no messenger returned—no Becky. Mr. Moss's *tably-de-hoty* was served at the appointed hour of half-past five, when such of the gentlemen lodging in the house as could afford to pay for the banquet, came and partook of it in the splendid front parlour before described, and with which Mr. Crawley's temporary lodging communicated, when Miss M. (Miss Hem,

as her papa called her) appeared without the curl-papers of the morning, and Mrs. Hem did the honours of a prime boiled leg of mutton and turnips, of which the colonel ate with a very faint appetite. Asked whether he would 'stand' a bottle of champagne for the company, he consented, and the ladies drank to his 'ealth, and Mr. Moss, in the most polite manner, 'looked towards him'.

In the midst of this repast, however, the door-bell was heard—young Moss of the ruddy hair rose up with the keys and answered the summons, and coming back, told the colonel that the messenger had returned with a bag, a desk, and a letter, which he gave him. 'No ceremony, colonel, I beg,' said Mrs. Moss, with a wave of her hand, and he opened the letter rather tremulously.—It was a beautiful letter, highly scented, on a pink paper, and with a light green seal.

MON PAUVRE CHER PETIT (Mrs. Crawley wrote), I could not sleep *one wink* for thinking of what had become of *my odious old monstre*: and only got to rest in the morning after sending for Mr. Blench (for I was in a fever), who gave me a composing draught and left orders with Finette that I should be disturbed *on no account*. So that my poor old man's messenger, who had *bien mauvaise mine*, Finette says, and *sentait le genièvre*, remained in the hall for some hours waiting my bell. You may fancy my state when I read your poor dear old ill-spelt letter.

Ill as I was, I instantly called for the carriage, and as soon as I was dressed (though I couldn't drink a drop of chocolate—I assure you I couldn't without my *monstre* to bring it to me), I drove *ventre à terre* to Nathan's. I saw him—I wept—I cried—I fell at his odious knees. Nothing would mollify the horrid man. He would have all the money, he said, or keep my poor *monstre* in prison. I drove home with the intention of paying that

*triste visite chez mon oncle* (when every trinket I have should be at your disposal though they would not fetch a hundred pounds, for some, you know, are with *ce cher oncle* already), and found Milor there with the Bulgarian old sheep-faced monster, who had come to compliment me upon last night's performances. Paddington came in, too, drawling and lisping and twiddling his hair; so did Champignac, and his chef—everybody with *foison* of compliments and pretty speeches—plaguing poor me, who longed to be rid of them, and was thinking *every moment of the time of mon pauvre prisonnier*.

When they were gone, I went down on my knees to Milor; told him we were going to pawn everything, and begged and prayed him to give me two hundred pounds. He pish'd and psha'd in a fury—told me not to be such a fool as to pawn—and said he would see whether he could lend me the money. At last he went away, promising that he would send it me in the morning: when I will bring it to my poor old monster with a kiss from his affectionate

BECKY.

I am writing in bed. Oh, I have such a headache and such a heartache!

When Rawdon read over this letter, he turned so red and looked so savage that the company at the table d'hôte easily perceived that bad news had reached him. All his suspicions, which he had been trying to banish, returned upon him. She could not even go out and sell her trinkets to free him. She could laugh and talk about compliments paid to her, whilst he was in prison. Who had put him there? Wenham had walked with him. Was there . . . He could hardly bear to think of what he suspected. Leaving the room hurriedly, he ran into his own—opened his desk, wrote two hurried lines, which he directed to Sir Pitt or Lady Crawley, and bade the messenger carry them at once to Gaunt Street, bidding him

to take a cab, and promising him a guinea if he was back in an hour.

In the note he besought his dear brother and sister, for the sake of God ; for the sake of his dear child and his honour ; to come to him and relieve him from his difficulty. He was in prison : he wanted a hundred pounds to set him free—he entreated them to come to him.

He went back to the dining-room after dispatching his messenger, and called for more wine. He laughed and talked with a strange boisterousness, as the people thought. Sometimes he laughed madly at his own fears, and went on drinking for an hour : listening all the while for the carriage which was to bring his fate back.

At the expiration of that time, wheels were heard whirling up to the gate—the young janitor went out with his gate-keys. It was a lady whom he let in at the bailiff's door.

‘Colonel Crawley,’ she said, trembling very much. He with a knowing look, locked the outer door upon her—then unlocked and opened the inner one, and calling out, ‘Colonel, you’re wanted,’ led her into the back parlour, which he occupied.

Rawdon came in from the dining-parlour where all those people were carousing, into his back-room ; a flare of coarse light following him into the apartment where the lady stood, still very nervous.

‘It is I, Rawdon,’ she said, in a timid voice, which she strove to render cheerful. ‘It is Jane.’ Rawdon was quite overcome by that kind voice and presence. He ran up to her—caught her in his arms—gasped out some inarticulate words of

thanks, and fairly sobbed on her shoulder. She did not know the cause of his emotion.

The bills of Mr. Moss were quickly settled, perhaps to the disappointment of that gentleman, who had counted on having the colonel as his guest over Sunday at least; and Jane, with beaming smiles and happiness in her eyes, carried away Rawdon from the bailiff's house, and they went homewards in the cab in which she had hastened to his release. 'Pitt was gone to a Parliamentary dinner,' she said, 'when Rawdon's note came, and so, dear Rawdon, I—I came myself;' and she put her kind hand in his. Perhaps it was well for Rawdon Crawley that Pitt was away at that dinner. Rawdon thanked his sister a hundred times, and with an ardour of gratitude which touched and almost alarmed that soft-hearted woman. 'Oh,' said he, in his rude, artless way, 'you—you don't know how I'm changed since I've known you, and—and little Rawdy. I—I'd like to change somehow. You see I want—I want—to be——.'—He did not finish the sentence, but she could interpret it. And that night after he left her, and as she sat by her own little boy's bed, she prayed humbly for that poor wayworn sinner.

Rawdon left her and walked home rapidly. It was nine o'clock at night. He ran across the streets, and the great squares of Vanity Fair, and at length came up breathless opposite his own house. He started back and fell against the railings, trembling as he looked up. The drawing-room windows were blazing with light. She had said that she was in bed and ill. He stood there

for some time, the light from the rooms on his pale face.

He took out his door-key and let himself into the house. He could hear laughter in the upper rooms. He was in the ball-dress in which he had been captured the night before. He went silently up the stairs; leaning against the banisters at the stair-head.—Nobody was stirring in the house besides—all the servants had been sent away. Rawdon heard laughter within—laughter and singing. Becky was singing a snatch of the song of the night before; a hoarse voice shouted, ‘Brava! Brava!’—it was Lord Steyne’s.

Rawdon opened the door and went in. A little table with a dinner was laid out—and wine and plate. Steyne was hanging over the sofa on which Becky sat. The wretched woman was in a brilliant full toilette, her arms and all her fingers sparkling with bracelets and rings; and the brilliants on her breast which Steyne had given her. He had her hand in his, and was bowing over it to kiss it, when Becky started up with a faint scream as she caught sight of Rawdon’s white face. At the next instant she tried a smile, a horrid smile, as if to welcome her husband: and Steyne rose up, grinding his teeth, pale, and with fury in his looks.

He, too, attempted a laugh—and came forward holding out his hand. ‘What, come back! How d’ye do, Crawley?’ he said, the nerves of his mouth twitching as he tried to grin at the intruder.

There was that in Rawdon’s face which caused Becky to fling herself before him. ‘I am innocent, Rawdon,’ she said; ‘before God, I am innocent.’ She clung hold of his coat, of his hands; her own were all covered with serpents, and rings, and

baubles. 'I am innocent.—Say I am innocent,' she said to Lord Steyne.

He thought a trap had been laid for him, and was as furious with the wife as with the husband. 'You innocent! Damn you,' he screamed out. 'You innocent! Why, every trinket you have on your body is paid for by me. I have given you thousands of pounds which this fellow has spent, and for which he has sold you. Innocent, by ——! You're as innocent as your mother, the ballet-girl, and your husband the bully. Don't think to frighten me as you have done others. Make way, sir, and let me pass;' and Lord Steyne seized up his hat, and, with flame in his eyes, and looking his enemy fiercely in the face, marched upon him, never for a moment doubting that the other would give way.

But Rawdon Crawley springing out, seized him by the neckcloth, until Steyne, almost strangled, writhed, and bent under his arm. 'You lie, you dog!' said Rawdon. 'You lie, you coward and villain!' And he struck the peer twice over the face with his open hand, and flung him bleeding to the ground. It was all done before Rebecca could interpose. She stood there trembling before him. She admired her husband, strong, brave, and victorious. .

'Come here,' he said.—She came up at once.

'Take off those things.'—She began, trembling, pulling the jewels from her arms, and the rings from her shaking fingers, and held them all in a heap, quivering and looking up at him. 'Throw them down,' he said, and she dropped them. He tore the diamond ornament out of her breast, and flung it at Lord Steyne. It cut him on his bald

forehead. Steyne wore the scar to his dying day.

‘Come upstairs,’ Rawdon said to his wife. ‘Don’t kill me, Rawdon,’ she said. He laughed savagely.—‘I want to see if that man lies about the money as he has about me. Has he given you any?’

‘No,’ said Rebecca, ‘that is——’

‘Give me your keys,’ Rawdon answered, and they went out together.

Rebecca gave him all the keys but one: and she was in hopes that he would not have remarked the absence of that. It belonged to the little desk which Amelia had given her in early days, and which she kept in a secret place. But Rawdon flung open boxes and wardrobes, throwing the multifarious trumpery of their contents here and there, and at last he found the desk. The woman was forced to open it. It contained papers, love-letters many years old—all sorts of small trinkets and woman’s memoranda. And it contained a pocket-book with banknotes. Some of these were dated ten years back, too, and one was quite a fresh one—a note for a thousand pounds which Lord Steyne had given her.

‘Did he give you this?’ Rawdon said.

‘Yes,’ Rebecca answered.

‘I’ll send it to him to-day,’ Rawdon said (for day had dawned again, and many hours had passed in this search), ‘and I will pay Briggs, who was kind to the boy, and some of the debts. You will let me know where I shall send the rest to you. You might have spared me a hundred pounds, Becky, out of all this—I have always shared with you.’

‘I am innocent,’ said Becky. And he left her without another word.

What were her thoughts when he left her? She remained for hours after he was gone, the sunshine pouring into the room, and Rebecca sitting alone on the bed’s edge. The drawers were all opened and their contents scattered about,—dresses and feathers, scarfs and trinkets, a heap of tumbled vanities lying in a wreck. Her hair was falling over her shoulders; her gown was torn where Rawdon had wrenched the brilliants out of it. She heard him go downstairs a few minutes after he left her, and the door slamming and closing on him. She knew he would never come back. He was gone for ever. Would he kill himself?—she thought—not until after he had met Lord Steyne. She thought of her long past life, and all the dismal incidents of it. Ah, how dreary it seemed, how miserable, lonely, and profitless! Should she take laudanum, and end it too—have done with all hopes, schemes, debts, and triumphs? The French maid found her in this position—sitting in the midst of her miserable ruins with clasped hands and dry eyes. The woman was her accomplice, and in Steyne’s pay. ‘Mon Dieu, madame, what has happened?’ she asked.

What *had* happened? Was she guilty or not? She said not; but who could tell what was truth which came from those lips; or if that corrupt heart was in this case pure? All her lies and her schemes, all her selfishness and her wiles, all her wit and genius had come to this bankruptcy. The woman closed the curtains, and with some entreaty and show of kindness, persuaded her mistress to

lie down on the bed. Then she went below and gathered up the trinkets, which had been lying on the floor since Rebecca dropped them there at her husband's orders and Lord Steyne went away.—*Vanity Fair*.

### HOW FIRST LOVE MAY INTERRUPT BREAKFAST

ONE fine morning in the full London season, Major Arthur Pendennis came over from his lodgings, according to his custom, to breakfast at a certain Club in Pall Mall, of which he was a chief ornament. At a quarter-past ten the major invariably made his appearance in the best blacked boots in all London, with a checked morning cravat that never was rumpled until dinner time, a buff waistcoat which bore the crown of his sovereign on the buttons, and linen so spotless that Mr. Brummel himself asked the name of his laundress, and would probably have employed her had not misfortunes compelled that great man to fly the country. Pendennis's coat, his white gloves, his whiskers, his very cane, were perfect of their kind as specimens of the costume of a military man *en retraite*. At a distance, or seeing his back merely, you would have taken him to be not more than thirty years old: it was only by a nearer inspection that you saw the factitious nature of his rich brown hair, and that there were a few crow's-feet round about the somewhat faded eyes of his handsome mottled face. His nose was of the Wellington pattern. His hands and wristbands were beautifully long and white. On the latter he wore handsome gold buttons given to him by his Royal Highness the

Duke of York, and on the others more than one elegant ring, the chief and largest of them being emblazoned with the famous arms of Pendennis.

He always took possession of the same table in the same corner of the room, from which nobody ever now thought of ousting him. One or two mad wags and wild fellows had, in former days, endeavoured to deprive him of this place; but there was a quiet dignity in the major's manner as he took his seat at the next table, and surveyed the interlopers, which rendered it impossible for any man to sit and breakfast under his eye; and that table—by the fire, and yet near the window—became his own. His letters were laid out there in expectation of his arrival, and many was the young fellow about town who looked with wonder at the number of those notes, and at the seals and franks which they bore. If there was any question about etiquette, society, who was married to whom, of what age such and such a duke was, Pendennis was the man to whom every one appealed. Marchionesses used to drive up to the Club, and leave notes for him, or fetch him out. He was perfectly affable. The young men liked to walk with him in the Park or down Pall Mall; for he touched his hat to everybody, and every other man he met was a lord.

The major sate down at his accustomed table then, and while the waiters went to bring him his toast and his hot newspaper, he surveyed his letters through his gold double eye-glass, and examined one pretty note after another, and laid them by in order. There were large solemn dinner cards, suggestive of three courses and heavy conversation; there were neat little confidential notes,

conveying female entreaties ; there was a note on thick official paper from the Marquis of Steyne, telling him to come to Richmond to a little party at the Star and Garter ; and another from the Bishop of Ealing and Mrs. Trail, requesting the honour of Major Pendennis's company at Ealing House, all of which letters Pendennis read gracefully, and with the more satisfaction, because Glowry, the Scotch surgeon, breakfasting opposite to him, was looking on, and hating him for having so many invitations, which nobody ever sent to Glowry.

These perused, the major took out his pocket-book to see on what days he was disengaged, and which of these many hospitable calls he could afford to accept or decline.

He threw over Cutler, the East India Director, in Baker Street, in order to dine with Lord Steyne and the little French party at the Star and Garter—the Bishop he accepted, because, though the dinner was slow, he liked to dine with bishops—and so went through his list and disposed of them according to his fancy or interest. Then he took his breakfast and looked over the paper, the gazette, the births and deaths, and the fashionable intelligence, to see that his name was down among the guests at my Lord So-and-so's fête, and in the intervals of these occupations carried on cheerful conversation with his acquaintances about the room.

Among the letters which formed Major Pendennis's budget for that morning there was only one unread, and which lay solitary and apart from all the fashionable London letters, with a country post-mark and a homely seal. The superscription

was in a pretty delicate female hand, marked 'Immediate' by the fair writer; yet the major had, for reasons of his own, neglected up to the present moment his humble rural petitioner, who to be sure could hardly hope to get a hearing among so many grand folks who attended his levee. The fact was, this was a letter from a female relative of Pendennis, and while the grandees of her brother's acquaintance were received and got their interview, and drove off, as it were, the patient country letter remained for a long time waiting for an audience in the ante-chamber, under the slop-basin.

At last it came to be this letter's turn, and the major broke a seal with 'Fairoaks' engraved upon it, and 'Clavering St. Mary's' for a post-mark. It was a double letter, and the Major commenced perusing the envelope before he attacked the inner epistle.

'Is it a letter from another *Jook*?' growled Mr. Glowry, inwardly. 'Pendennis would not be leaving that to the last, I'm thinking.'

'My dear Major Pendennis,' the letter ran, 'I beg and implore you to come to me *immediately*'—very likely, thought Pendennis, and Steyne's dinner to-day—'I am in the very greatest grief and perplexity. My dearest boy, who has been hitherto everything the fondest mother could wish, is grieving me *dreadfully*. He has formed—I can hardly write it—a passion, an infatuation,'—the major grinned—'for an actress who has been performing here. She is at least twelve years older than Arthur—who will not be eighteen till next February—and the wretched boy insists upon marrying her.'

‘ Hay ! What ’s making Pendennis swear now ? ’  
—Mr. Glowry asked of himself, for rage and wonder were concentrated in the major’s open mouth, as he read this astounding announcement.

‘ Do, my dear friend,’ the grief-stricken lady went on, ‘ come to me instantly on the receipt of this ; and, as Arthur’s guardian, entreat, command, the wretched child to give up this most deplorable resolution.’ And, after more entreaties to the above effect, the writer concluded by signing herself the major’s ‘ unhappy affectionate sister, Helen Pendennis.’

‘ Fair Oaks, Tuesday ’—the major concluded, reading the last words of the letter—‘ A d—d pretty business at Fair Oaks, Tuesday ; now let us see what the boy has to say ’ ; and he took the other letter, which was written in a great floundering boy’s hand, and sealed with the large signet of the Pendennises, even larger than the major’s own, and with supplementary wax sputtered all round the seal, in token of the writer’s tremulousness and agitation.

The epistle ran thus—

FAIROAKS,  
*Monday, midnight.*

MY DEAR UNCLE,

In informing you of my engagement with Miss Costigan, daughter of J. Chesterfield Costigan, Esq., of Costiganstown, but, perhaps, better known to you under her professional name of Miss Fotheringay, of the Theatres Royal Drury Lane and Crow Street, and of the Norwich and Welsh Circuit, I am aware that I make an announcement which cannot, according to the present prejudices of society at least, be welcome to my family. My dearest mother, on whom, God knows, I would wish to inflict no needless pain, is deeply moved and grieved, I am sorry to say, by the intelligence which I have this night conveyed to her.

I beseech you, my dear Sir, to come down and reason with her and console her. Although obliged by poverty to earn an honourable maintenance by the exercise of her splendid talents, Miss Costigan's family is as ancient and noble as our own. When our ancestor, Ralph Pendennis, landed with Richard II in Ireland, my Emily's forefathers were kings of that country. I have the information from Mr. Costigan, who, like yourself, is a military man.

It is in vain I have attempted to argue with my dear mother, and prove to her that a young lady of irreproachable character and lineage, endowed with the most splendid gifts of beauty and genius, who devotes herself to the exercise of one of the noblest professions, for the sacred purpose of maintaining her family, is a being whom we should all love and reverence, rather than avoid ;—my poor mother has prejudices which it is impossible for my logic to overcome, and refuses to welcome to her arms one who is disposed to be her most affectionate daughter through life.

Although Miss Costigan is some years older than myself, that circumstance does not operate as a barrier to my affection, and I am sure will not influence its duration. A love like mine, Sir, I feel, is contracted once and for ever. As I never had dreamed of love until I saw her—I feel now that I shall die without ever knowing another passion. It is the fate of my life ; and having loved once, I should despise myself, and be unworthy of my name as a gentleman, if I hesitated to abide by my passion : if I did not give all where I felt all, and endow the woman who loves me fondly with my whole heart and my whole fortune.

‘ I press for a speedy marriage with my Emily—for why, in truth, should it be delayed ? A delay implies a doubt, which I cast from me as unworthy. It is impossible that my sentiments can change towards Emily—that at any age she can be anything but the sole object of my love. Why, then, wait ? I entreat you, my dear Uncle, to come down and reconcile my dear mother to our union, and I address you as a man of the world, *qui mores hominum multorum vidit et urbes*, who will not feel any of the weak scruples and fears which agitate a lady who has scarcely ever left her village.

Pray, come down to us immediately. I am quite confident that—apart from considerations of fortune—you will admire and approve of my Emily.

Your affectionate nephew,  
ARTHUR PENDENNIS, Jr.

When the major had concluded the perusal of this letter, his countenance assumed an expression of such rage and horror that Glowry, the surgeon, felt in his pocket for his lancet, which he always carried in his card-case, and thought his respected friend was going into a fit. The intelligence was indeed sufficient to agitate Pendennis. The head of the Pendennises going to marry an actress ten years his senior—a head-strong boy about to plunge into matrimony. ‘The mother has spoiled the young rascal,’ groaned the major inwardly, ‘with her cursed sentimentality and romantic rubbish. My nephew marry a tragedy queen! Gracious mercy, people will laugh at me so that I shall not dare show my head!’ And he thought with an inexpressible pang that he must give up Lord Steyne’s dinner at Richmond, and must lose his rest and pass the night in an abominable tight mail-coach, instead of taking pleasure, as he had promised himself, in some of the most agreeable and select society in England.

He quitted his breakfast-table for the adjoining writing-room, and there ruefully wrote off refusals to the Marquis, the Earl, the Bishop, and all his entertainers; and he ordered his servant to take places in the mail-coach for that evening, of course charging the sum which he disbursed for the seats to the account of the widow and the young scapegrace of whom he was guardian.—*Pendennis*.

## THE MAJOR YIELDS NEITHER HIS MONEY NOR HIS LIFE

EARLY next morning Pendennis's shutters were opened by Morgan, who appeared as usual, with a face perfectly grave and respectful, bearing with him the old gentleman's clothes, cans of water, and elaborate toilette requisites.

'It's you, is it?' said the old fellow, from the bed. 'I shan't take you back again, you understand.'

'I've not the least wish to be took back agin, Major Pendennis,' Mr. Morgan said, with grave dignity, 'nor to serve you nor hany man. But as I wish you to be comf'table as long as you stay in my house, I came up to do what's ne'ssary.' And once more, and for the last time, Mr. James Morgan laid out the silver dressing-case, and strapped the shining razor.

These offices concluded, he addressed himself to the major with an indescribable solemnity, and said: 'Thinkin' that you would most likely be in want of a respectable pusson, until you suited yourself, I spoke to a young man last night, who is 'ere.'

'Indeed,' said the warrior in the tent-bed.

'He've lived in the fust fam'lies, and I can wouch for his respectability.'

'You are monstrous polite,' grinned the old major. And the truth is, that after the occurrences of the previous evening, Morgan had gone out to his own club at the 'Wheel of Fortune', and there finding Frosch, a courier and valet just returned from a foreign tour with young Lord Cubley, and for the present disposable, had represented to

Mr. Frosch, that he, Morgan, had 'a devil of a blow hup with his own gov'nor, and was goin' to retire from the business haltogether, and that if Frosch wanted a temporary job, he might prob'bly have it by applying in Bury Street.'

'You are very polite,' said the major, 'and your recommendation, I am sure, will have every weight.'

Morgan blushed: he felt his master was 'a-chaffin' of him.' 'The man have awaited on you before, sir,' he said, with great dignity. 'Lord De la Pole, sir, gave him to his nephew, young Lord Cubley, and he have been with him on his foring tour, and not wishing to go to Fitzurse Castle, which Frosch's chest is delicate, and he cannot bear the cold in Scotland, he is free to serve you or not, as you choose.'

'I repeat, sir, that you are exceedingly polite,' said the major. 'Come in, Frosch—you will do very well—Mr. Morgan, will you have the great kindness to——'

'I shall show him what is ne'ssary, sir, and what is custom'ry for you to wish to 'ave done. Will you please to take breakfast 'ere or at the club, Major Pendennis?'

'With your kind permission, I will breakfast here, and afterwards we will make our little arrangements.'

'If you please, sir.'

'Will you now oblige me by leaving the room?'

Morgan withdrew; the excessive politeness of his ex-employer made him almost as angry as the major's bitterest words. And whilst the old gentleman is making his mysterious toilet, we will also modestly retire.

After breakfast, Major Pendennis and his new aide-de-camp occupied themselves in preparing for their departure. The establishment of the old bachelor was not very complicated. He encumbered himself with no useless wardrobe. A Bible (his mother's), a road-book, Pen's novel (calfelegant), and the Duke of Wellington's Dispatches, with a few prints, maps, and portraits of that illustrious general, and of various sovereigns and consorts of this country, and of the general under whom Major Pendennis had served in India, formed his literary and artistical collection : he was always ready to march at a few hours' notice, and the cases in which he had brought his property into his lodgings some fifteen years before were still in the lofts, amply sufficient to receive all his goods. These, the young woman who did the work of the house, and who was known by the name of Betty to her mistress, and of 'Slavey' to Mr. Morgan, brought down from their resting-place, and obediently dusted and cleaned under the eyes of the terrible Morgan. His demeanour was guarded and solemn ; he had spoken no word as yet to Mrs. Brixham respecting his threats of the past night, but he looked as if he would execute them, and the poor widow tremblingly awaited her fate.

Old Pendennis, armed with his cane, superintended the package of his goods and chattels, under the hands of Mr. Frosch, and the slavey burned such of his papers as he did not care to keep : flung open doors and closets until they were all empty ; and now all boxes and chests were closed, except his desk, which was ready to receive the final accounts of Mr. Morgan.

That individual now made his appearance, and

brought his books. 'As I wish to speak to you in privick, per'aps you will 'ave the kindness to request Frosch to step downstairs,' he said, on entering.

'Bring a couple of cabs, Frosch, if you please—and wait downstairs until I ring for you,' said the major. Morgan saw Frosch downstairs, watched him go along the street upon his errand, and produced his books and accounts, which were simple and very easily settled.

'And now, sir,' said he, having pocketed the cheque, which his ex-employer gave him, and signed his name to his book with a flourish, 'and now that accounts is closed between us, sir,' he said, 'I porpose to speak to you as one man to another' (Morgan liked the sound of his own voice; and, as an individual, indulged in public speaking whenever he could get an opportunity, at the club, or the housekeeper's room), 'and I must tell you, that I'm in *possussion of certing infamation*.'

'And may I inquire of what nature, pray?' asked the major.

'It's valuble information, Major Pendennis, as you know very well. I know of a marriage as is no marriage—of a honourable baronet as is no more married than I am; and which his wife is married to somebody else, as you know too, sir.'

Pendennis at once understood all. 'Ha! this accounts for your behaviour. You have been listening at the door, sir, I suppose,' said the major, looking very haughty; 'I forgot to look at the key-hole when I went to that public-house, or I might have suspected what sort of a person was behind it.'

‘I may have my schemes as you may have yours, I suppose,’ answered Morgan. ‘I may get my information, and I may act on that information, and I may find that information valuable as anybody else may. A poor servant may have a bit of luck as well as a gentleman, mayn’t he? Don’t you be putting on your ’aughty looks, sir, and comin’ the aristocrat over me. That’s all gammon with me. I’m an Englishman, I am, and as good as you.’

‘To what the devil does this tend, sir? and how does the secret which you have surprised concern me, I should like to know?’ asked Major Pendennis, with great majesty.

‘How does it concern me, indeed? how grand we are! How does it concern my nephew, I wonder? How does it concern my nephew’s seat in Parlyment: and to subornation of bigamy? How does it concern that? What, are you to be the only man to have a secret, and to trade on it? Why shouldn’t I go halves, Major Pendennis? I’ve found it out too. Look here! I ain’t goin’ to be unreasonable with you. Make it worth my while, and I’ll keep the thing close. Let Mr. Arthur take his seat, and his rich wife, if you like; I don’t want to marry her. But I will have my share, as sure as my name’s James Morgan. And if I don’t——’

‘And if you don’t, sir—what?’ Pendennis asked.

‘If I don’t, I’ll split, and tell all. I smash Clavering, and have him and his wife up for bigamy—so help me, I will! I smash young Hopeful’s marriage, and I show up you and him as makin’ use of this secret, in order to squeeze

a seat in Parlyment out of Sir Francis, and a fortune out of his wife.'

'Mr. Pendennis knows no more of this business than the babe unborn, sir,' cried the major, aghast. 'No more than Lady Clavering—than Miss Amory does.'

'Tell that to the marines, major,' replied the valet; 'that cock won't fight with me.'

'Do you doubt my word, you villain?'

'No bad language. I don't care one twopence 'a'p'ny whether your word's true or not. I tell you, I intend this to be a nice little annuity to me, major: for I have every one of you; and I ain't such a fool as to let you go. I should say that you might make it five hundred a year to me among you, easy. Pay me down the first quarter now, and I'm as mum as a mouse. Just give me a note for one twenty-five. There's your cheque-book on your desk.'

'And there's this too, you villain,' cried the old gentleman. In the desk to which the valet pointed was a little double-barrelled pistol, which had belonged to Pendennis's old patron, the Indian commander-in-chief, and which had accompanied him in many a campaign. 'One more word, you scoundrel, and I'll shoot you, like a mad dog. Stop—by Jove, I'll do it now. You'll assault me, will you? You'll strike at an old man, will you, you lying coward? Kneel down and say your prayers, sir, for by the Lord you shall die.'

The major's face glared with rage at his adversary, who looked terrified before him for a moment, and at the next, with a shriek of 'Murder', sprang towards the open window, under which a police-

man happened to be on his beat. 'Murder! Police!' bellowed Mr. Morgan.

To his surprise, Major Pendennis wheeled away the table and walked to the other window, which was also open. He beckoned the policeman. 'Come up here, policeman,' he said, and then went and placed himself against the door.

'You miserable sneak,' he said to Morgan; 'the pistol hasn't been loaded these fifteen years: as you would have known very well, if you had not been such a coward. That policeman is coming, and I will have him up, and have your trunks searched; I have reason to believe that you are a thief, sir. I know you are. I'll swear to the things.'

'You gave 'em to me—you gave 'em to me!' cried Morgan.

The major laughed. 'We'll see,' he said; and the guilty valet remembered some fine lawn-fronted shirts—a certain gold-headed cane—an opera-glass, which he had forgotten to bring down, and of which he had assumed the use along with certain articles of his master's clothes, which the old dandy neither wore nor asked for.

Policeman X entered; followed by the scared Mrs. Brixham and her maid-of-all-work, who had been at the door and found some difficulty in closing it against the street amateurs, who wished to see the row. The major began instantly to speak.

'I have had occasion to discharge this drunken scoundrel,' he said. 'Both last night and this morning he insulted and assaulted me. I am an old man and took up a pistol. You see it is not loaded; and this coward cried out before he was hurt. I am glad you are come. I was charging

him with taking my property, and desired to examine his trunks and his room.'

'The velvet cloak you ain't worn these three years, nor the weskits, and I thought I might take the shirts, and I—I take my hoath I intended to put back the hopera-glass,' roared Morgan, writhing with rage and terror.

'The man acknowledges that he is a thief,' the major said, calmly. 'He has been in my service for years, and I have treated him with every kindness and confidence. We will go upstairs and examine his trunks.'

In those trunks Mr. Morgan had things which he would fain keep from public eyes. Mr. Morgan, the bill discounter, gave goods as well as money to his customers. He provided young spendthrifts with snuff-boxes and pins and jewels and pictures and cigars, and of a very doubtful quality those cigars and jewels and pictures were. Their display at a police-office, the discovery of his occult profession, and the exposure of the major's property, which he had appropriated, indeed, rather than stolen—would not have added to the reputation of Mr. Morgan. He looked a piteous image of terror and discomfiture.

'He'll smash me, will he?' thought the major. 'I'll crush him now, and finish with him.'

But he paused. He looked at poor Mrs. Brixham's scared face; and he thought for a moment to himself that the man brought to bay and in prison might make disclosures which had best be kept secret, and that it was best not to deal too fiercely with a desperate man.

'Stop,' he said, 'policeman. I'll speak with this man by himself.'

'Do you give Mr. Morgan in charge?' said the policeman.

'I have brought no charge as yet,' the major said, with a significant look at his man.

'Thank you, sir,' whispered Morgan, very low.

'Go outside the door, and wait there, policeman, if you please.—Now, Morgan, you have played one game with me, and you have not had the best of it, my good man. No, begad, you've not had the best of it, though you had the best hand; and you've got to pay, too, now, you scoundrel.'

'Yes, sir,' said the man.

'I've only found out, within the last week, the game which you have been driving, you villain. Young De Boots, of the Blues, recognized you as the man who came to barracks, and did business one-third in money, one-third in eau-de-Cologne, and one-third in French prints, you confounded demure old sinner! I didn't miss anything, or care a straw what you'd taken, you booby; but I took the shot, and it hit—hit the bull's-eye, begad. Dammy, sir, I'm an old campaigner.'

'What do you want with me, sir?'

'I'll tell you. Your bills, I suppose, you keep about you in that dem'd great leather pocket-book, don't you? You'll burn Mrs. Brixham's bills?'

'Sir, I ain't a-goin' to part with my property,' growled the man.

'You lent her sixty pounds five years ago. She and that poor devil of an insurance clerk, her son, have paid you fifty pounds a year ever since; and you have got a bill of sale of her furniture, and her note of hand for a hundred and fifty pounds. She told me so last night. By Jove, sir, you've bled that poor woman enough.'

‘I won’t give it up,’ said Morgan; ‘If I do I’m——’

‘Policeman!’ cried the major.

‘You shall have the bill,’ said Morgan. ‘You’re not going to take money of me, and you a gentleman?’

‘I shall want you directly,’ said the major to X, who here entered, and who again withdrew.

‘No, my good sir,’ the old gentleman continued; ‘I have not any desire to have further pecuniary transactions with you; but we will draw out a little paper, which you will have the kindness to sign. No, stop!—you shall write it: you have improved immensely in writing of late, and have now a very good hand. You shall sit down and write, if you please—there, at that table—so—let me see—we may as well have the date. Write “Bury Street, St. James’s, October 21, 18—.”’

And Morgan wrote as he was instructed, and as the pitiless old major continued:—

“I, James Morgan, having come in extreme poverty into the service of Arthur Pendennis, Esquire, of Bury Street, St. James’s, a major in her Majesty’s service, acknowledge that I received liberal wages and board wages from my employer, during fifteen years.”—You can’t object to that, I’m sure,’ said the major.

‘During fifteen years,’ wrote Morgan.

“In which time, by my own care and prudence,” the dictator resumed, “I have managed to amass sufficient money to purchase the house in which my master resides, and, besides, to effect other savings. Amongst other persons from whom I have had money, I may mention my present tenant, Mrs. Brixham, who, in consideration of

sixty pounds advanced by me five years since, has paid back to me the sum of two hundred and fifty pounds sterling, besides giving me a note of hand for one hundred and twenty pounds, which I restore to her at the desire of my late master, Major Arthur Pendennis, and therewith free her furniture, of which I had a bill of sale."—Have you written ?'

'I think if this pistol was loaded, I'd blow your brains out,' said Morgan.

'No, you wouldn't. You have too great a respect for your valuable life, my good man,' the major answered. 'Let us go on and begin a new sentence.'

'“And having, in return for my master's kindness, stolen his property from him, which I acknowledge to be now upstairs in my trunks ; and having uttered falsehoods regarding his and other honourable families, I do hereby, in consideration of his clemency to me, express my regret for uttering these falsehoods, and for stealing his property ; and declare that I am not worthy of belief, and that I hope—yes, begad—that I hope to amend for the future. Signed, James Morgan.”'

'I'm d——d if I sign it,' said Morgan.

'My good man, it will happen to you, whether you sign or no, begad,' said the old fellow, chuckling at his own wit. 'There, I shall not use this, you understand, unless—unless I am compelled to do so. Mrs. Brixham, and our friend the policeman, will witness it, I dare say, without reading it : and I will give the old lady back her note of hand, and say, which you will confirm, that she and you are quits. I see there is Frosch come back with the cab for my trunks ; I shall go to an hotel.—

You may come in now, policeman ; Mr. Morgan and I have arranged our little dispute. If Mrs. Brixham will sign this paper, and you, policeman, will do so, I shall be very much obliged to you both. Mrs. Brixham, you and your worthy landlord, Mr. Morgan, are quits. I wish you joy of him. Let Frosch come and pack the rest of the things.'

Frosch, aided by the slavey, under the calm superintendence of Mr. Morgan, carried Major Pendennis's boxes to the cabs in waiting ; and Mrs. Brixham, when her persecutor was not by, came and asked a Heaven's blessing upon the major, her preserver, and the best and quietest and kindest of lodgers. And having given her a finger to shake, which the humble lady received with a curtsy, and over which she was ready to make a speech full of tears, the major cut short that valedictory oration, and walked out of the house to the hotel in Jermyn Street, which was not many steps from Morgan's door.

That individual, looking forth from the parlour window, discharged anything but blessings at his parting guest ; but the stout old boy could afford not to be frightened at Mr. Morgan, and flung him a look of great contempt and humour as he strutted away with his cane.—*Pendennis*.

## HOW GENERAL WEBB WON THE BATTLE OF WYNENDAEL AND HOW HIS SWORD PROVED USEFUL IN HIS QUARREL WITH THE DUKE OF MARLBOROUGH

By the besiegers and besieged of Lille, some of the most brilliant feats of valour were performed that ever illustrated any war. On the French side

(whose gallantry was prodigious, the skill and bravery of Marshal Boufflers actually eclipsing those of his conqueror, the Prince of Savoy) may be mentioned that daring action of Messieurs de Luxembourg and Tournefort, who, with a body of horse and dragoons, carried powder into the town, of which the besieged were in extreme want, each soldier bringing a bag with forty pounds of powder behind him; with which perilous provision they engaged our own horse, faced the fire of the foot brought out to meet them: and though half of the men were blown up in the dreadful errand they rode on, a part of them got into the town with the succours of which the garrison was so much in want. A French officer, Monsieur du Bois, performed an act equally daring, and perfectly successful. The duke's great army lying at Helchin, and covering the siege, and it being necessary for Monsieur de Vendosme to get news of the condition of the place, Captain du Bois performed his famous exploit: not only passing through the lines of the siege, but swimming afterwards no less than seven moats and ditches: and coming back the same way, swimming with his letters in his mouth.

By these letters Monsieur de Boufflers said that he could undertake to hold the place till October; and that, if one of the convoys of the Allies could be intercepted, they must raise the siege altogether.

Such a convoy as hath been said was now prepared at Ostend, and about to march for the siege; and on the 27th September, we (and the French too) had news that it was on its way. It was composed of 700 waggons, containing ammunition of all sorts, and was escorted out of Ostend by 2,000 infantry and 300 horse. At the same time

Monsieur de la Mothe quitted Bruges, having with him five-and-thirty battalions, and upwards of sixty squadrons and forty guns, in pursuit of the convoy.

Major-General Webb had meanwhile made up a force of twenty battalions, and three squadrons of dragoons, at Turout, whence he moved to cover the convoy and pursue la Mothe: with whose advanced guard ours came up upon the great plain of Turout, and before the little wood and castle of Wynendael; behind which the convoy was marching.

As soon as they came in sight of the enemy, our advanced troops were halted, with the wood behind them, and the rest of our force brought up as quickly as possible, our little body of horse being brought forward to the opening of the plain, as our general said, to amuse the enemy. When Monsieur la Mothe came up he found us posted in two lines in front of the wood; and formed his own army in battle facing ours, in eight lines, four of infantry in front, and dragoons and cavalry behind.

The French began the action, as usual, with a cannonade which lasted three hours, when they made their attack, advancing in eight lines, four of foot and four of horse, upon the allied troops in the wood where we were posted. Their infantry behaved ill; they were ordered to charge with the bayonet, but, instead, began to fire, and almost at the very first discharge from our men, broke and fled. The cavalry behaved better; with these alone, who were three or four times as numerous as our whole force, Monsieur de la Mothe might have won victory: but only two of our battalions were shaken in the least; and these speedily

rallied: nor could the repeated attacks of the French horse cause our troops to budge an inch from the position in the wood in which our general had placed them.

After attacking for two hours, the French retired at nightfall entirely foiled. With all the loss we had inflicted upon him, the enemy was still three times stronger than we: and it could not be supposed that our general could pursue M. de la Mothe, or do much more than hold our ground about the wood, from which the Frenchman had in vain attempted to dislodge us. La Mothe retired behind his forty guns, his cavalry protecting them better than it had been enabled to annoy us; and meanwhile the convoy, which was of more importance than all our little force, and the safe passage of which we would have dropped to the last man to accomplish, marched away in perfect safety during the action, and joyfully reached the besieging camp before Lille.

Major-General Cadogan, my lord duke's quartermaster-general (and between whom and Mr. Webb there was no love lost), accompanied the convoy, and joined Mr. Webb with a couple of hundred horse just as the battle was over, and the enemy in full retreat. He offered, readily enough, to charge with his horse upon the French as they fell back; but his force was too weak to inflict any damage upon them; and Mr. Webb, commanding as Cadogan's senior, thought enough was done in holding our ground before an enemy that might still have overwhelmed us had we engaged him in the open territory, and in securing the safe passage of the convoy. Accordingly, the horse brought up by Cadogan did not draw a sword;

and only prevented, by the good countenance they showed, any disposition the French might have had to renew the attack on us. And no attack coming, at nightfall General Cadogan drew off with his squadron, being bound for head-quarters, the two generals at parting grimly saluting each other.

‘He will be at Roncq time enough to lick my lord duke’s trenchers at supper,’ says Mr. Webb.

Our own men lay out in the woods of Wynendael that night, and our general had his supper in the little castle there.

‘If I was Cadogan, I would have a peerage for this day’s work,’ General Webb said; ‘and Harry, thou shouldst have a regiment. Thou hast been reported in the last two actions: thou wert near killed in the first. I shall mention thee in my dispatch to his grace the commander-in-chief, and recommend thee to poor Dick Harwood’s vacant majority. Have you ever a hundred guineas to give Cardonnel? Slip them into his hand to-morrow, when you go to head-quarters with my report.’

In this report the major-general was good enough to mention Captain Esmond’s name with particular favour; and that gentleman carried the dispatch to head-quarters the next day, and was not a little pleased to bring back a letter by his grace’s secretary, addressed to Lieutenant-General Webb. The Dutch officer dispatched by Count Nassau Woudenbourg, Vaelt-Mareschal Auverquerque’s son, brought back also a complimentary letter to his commander, who had seconded Mr. Webb in the action with great valour and skill.

Esmond, with a low bow and a smiling face,

presented his dispatch, and saluted Mr. Webb as Lieutenant-General, as he gave it in. The gentlemen round about him—he was riding with his suite on the road to Menin as Esmond came up with him—gave a cheer, and he thanked them, and opened the dispatch with rather a flushed eager face.

He slapped it down on his boot in a rage after he had read it. ‘ ’Tis not even writ with his own hand. Read it out, Esmond.’ And Esmond read it out :—

Sir—Mr. Cadogan is just now come in, and has acquainted me with the success of the action you had yesterday in the afternoon against the body of troops commanded by Monsieur de la Mothe, at Wynendael, which must be attributed chiefly to your good conduct and resolution. You may be sure I shall do you justice at home, and be glad on all occasions to own the service you have done in securing this convoy.—Yours, &c., M.

‘ Two lines by that d——d Cardonnel, and no more, for the taking of Lille—for beating five times our number—for an action as brilliant as the best he ever fought,’ says poor Mr. Webb. ‘ Lieutenant-General ! That ’s not his doing. I was the oldest major-general. By ——, I believe he had been better pleased if I had been beat.’

The letter to the Dutch officer was in French, and longer and more complimentary than that to Mr. Webb.

‘ And this is the man,’ he broke out, ‘ that ’s gorged with gold—that ’s covered with titles and honours that we won for him—and that grudges even a line of praise to a comrade in arms ! Hasn’t he enough ? Don’t we fight that he may roll in riches ? Well, well, wait for the *Gazette*, gentlemen. The queen

and the country will do us justice if his grace denies it us.' There were tears of rage in the brave warrior's eyes as he spoke; and he dashed them off his face on to his glove. He shook his fist in the air. 'Oh, by the Lord!' says he, 'I know what I had rather have than a peerage!'

'And what is that, sir?' some of them asked.

'I had rather have a quarter of an hour with John Churchill, on a fair green field, and only a pair of rapiers between my shirt and his——'

'Sir!' interposes one.

'Tell him so! I know that's what you mean. I know every word goes to him that's dropped from every general officer's mouth. I don't say he's not brave. Curse him! he's brave enough; but we'll wait for the *Gazette*, gentlemen. God save her Majesty! she'll do us justice.'

The *Gazette* did not come to us till a month afterwards; when my general and his officers had the honour to dine with Prince Eugene in Lille; his highness being good enough to say that we had brought the provisions, and ought to share in the banquet. 'Twas a great banquet. His grace of Marlborough was on his highness's right, and on his left the Mareschal de Boufflers, who had so bravely defended the place. The chief officers of either army were present; and you may be sure Esmond's general was splendid this day: his tall noble person, and manly beauty of face, made him remarkable anywhere; he wore, for the first time, the star of the Order of Generosity, that his Prussian Majesty had sent to him for his victory. His Highness, the Prince of Savoy, called a toast to the conqueror of Wynendael. My lord duke drank it with rather a sickly smile. The aides de

camp were present; and Harry Esmond and his dear young lord were together, as they always strove to be when duty would permit: they were over against the table where the generals were, and could see all that passed pretty well. Frank laughed at my lord duke's glum face: the affair of Wynendael, and the captain-general's conduct to Webb, had been the talk of the whole army. When his highness spoke, and gave—'*Le vainqueur de Wynendael; son armée et sa victoire,*' adding, '*qui nous font dîner à Lille aujourd'hui*'—there was a great cheer through the hall; for Mr. Webb's bravery, generosity, and very weaknesses of character caused him to be beloved in the army.

'Like Hector, handsome, and like Paris, brave!' whispers Frank Castlewood. 'A Venus, an elderly Venus, couldn't refuse him a pippin. Stand up, Harry. See, we are drinking the army of Wynendael. Ramillies is nothing to it. Huzzay! Huzzay!'

At this very time, and just after our general had made his acknowledgement, some one brought in an English *Gazette*—and was passing it from hand to hand down the table. Officers were eager enough to read it; mothers and sisters at home must have sickened over it. There scarce came out a *Gazette* for six years that did not tell of some heroic death or some brilliant achievement.

'Here it is—Action of Wynendael—here you are, general,' says Frank, seizing hold of the little dingy paper that soldiers love to read so; and, scrambling over from our bench, he went to where the general sat, who knew him, and had seen many a time at his table his laughing, handsome face, which everybody loved who saw. The generals

in their great perukes made way for him. He handed the paper over General Dohna's buff coat to our general on the opposite side.

He came hobbling back, and blushing at his feat: 'I thought he'd like it, Harry,' the young fellow whispered. 'Didn't I like to read my name after Ramillies, in the *London Gazette*?—Viscount Castlewood serving a volunteer—I say, what's yonder?'

Mr. Webb, reading the *Gazette*, looked very strange—slapped it down on the table—then sprung up in his place, and began—'Will your highness please to——'

His grace the Duke of Marlborough here jumped up too—'There's some mistake, my dear General Webb.'

'Your grace had better rectify it,' says Mr. Webb, holding out the letter; but he was five off his grace the prince duke, who, besides, was higher than the general (being seated with the Prince of Savoy, the Electoral Prince of Hanover, and the envoys of Prussia and Denmark, under a baldaquin), and Webb could not reach him, tall as he was.

'Stay,' says he, with a smile, as if catching at some idea, and then, with a perfect courtesy, drawing his sword, he ran the *Gazette* through with the point, and said, 'Permit me to hand it to your grace.'

The duke looked very black. 'Take it,' says he, to his master of the horse, who was waiting behind him.

The lieutenant-general made a very low bow, and retired and finished his glass. The *Gazette* in which Mr. Cardonnel, the duke's secretary, gave an account of the victory of Wynendael, mentioned

Mr. Webb's name, but gave the sole praise and conduct of the action to the duke's favourite, Mr. Cadogan.

There was no little talk and excitement occasioned by this strange behaviour of General Webb, who had almost drawn a sword upon the commander-in-chief; but the general, after the first outbreak of his anger, mastered it outwardly altogether; and, by his subsequent behaviour, had the satisfaction of even more angering the commander-in-chief, than he could have done by any public exhibition of resentment.

On returning to his quarters, and consulting with his chief adviser, Mr. Esmond, who was now entirely in the general's confidence, and treated by him as a friend, and almost a son, Mr. Webb wrote a letter to his grace the commander-in-chief, in which he said :

Your grace must be aware that the sudden perusal of the *London Gazette*, in which your grace's secretary, Mr. Cardonnel, hath mentioned Major-General Cadogan's name, as the officer commanding in the late action of Wynendael, must have caused a feeling of anything but pleasure to the general who fought that action.

Your grace must be aware that Mr. Cadogan was not even present at the battle, though he arrived with squadrons of horse at its close, and put himself under the command of his superior officer. And as the result of the battle of Wynendael, in which Lieutenant-General Webb had the good fortune to command, was the capture of Lille, the relief of Brussels, then invested by the enemy under the Elector of Bavaria, the restoration of the great cities of Ghent and Bruges, of which the enemy (by treason within the walls) had got possession in the previous year : Mr. Webb cannot consent to forgo the honours of such a success and service, for the benefit of Mr. Cadogan or any other person.

As soon as the military operations of the year are

over, Lieutenant-General Webb will request permission to leave the army, and return to his place in Parliament, where he gives notice to his grace the commander-in-chief, that he shall lay his case before the House of Commons, the country, and her majesty the queen.

By his eagerness to rectify that false statement of the *Gazette*, which had been written by his grace's secretary, Mr. Cardonnel, Mr. Webb, not being able to reach his grace the commander-in-chief on account of the gentlemen seated between them, placed the paper containing the false statement on his sword, so that it might more readily arrive in the hands of his Grace the Duke of Marlborough, who surely would wish to do justice to every officer of his army.

Mr. Webb knows his duty too well to think of insubordination to his superior officer, or of using his sword in a campaign against any but the enemies of her majesty. He solicits permission to return to England immediately the military duties will permit, and take with him to England Captain Esmond, of his regiment, who acted as his aide de camp, and was present during the entire action, and noted by his watch the time when Mr. Cadogan arrived at its close.

The commander-in-chief could not but grant this permission, nor could he take notice of Webb's letter, though it was couched in terms the most insulting. Half the army believed that the cities of Ghent and Bruges were given up by a treason, which some in our army very well understood; that the commander-in-chief would not have relieved Lille if he could have helped himself; that he would not have fought that year had not the Prince of Savoy forced him. When the battle once began, then, for his own renown, my Lord Marlborough would fight as no man in the world ever fought better; and no bribe on earth could keep him from beating the enemy.

But the matter was taken up by the subordinates; and half the army might have been

by the ears, if the quarrel had not been stopped. General Cadogan sent an intimation to General Webb to say that he was ready if Webb liked, and would meet him. This was a kind of invitation our stout old general was always too ready to accept, and 'twas with great difficulty we got the general to reply that he had no quarrel with Mr. Cadogan, who had behaved with perfect gallantry, but only with those at head-quarters, who had belied him. Mr. Cardonnel offered General Webb reparation; Mr. Webb said he had a cane at the service of Mr. Cardonnel, and the only satisfaction he wanted from him was one he was not likely to get, namely, the truth. . . .

All the town was indignant at my lord duke's unjust treatment of General Webb, and applauded the vote of thanks which the House of Commons gave to the general for his victory at Wynendael. 'Tis certain that the capture of Lille was the consequence of that lucky achievement, and the humiliation of the old French king, who was said to suffer more at the loss of this great city, than from any of the former victories our troops had won over him. And, I think, no small part of Mr. Webb's exultation at his victory, arose from the idea that Marlborough had been disappointed of a great bribe the French king had promised him, should the siege be raised. The very sum of money offered to him was mentioned by the duke's enemies; and honest Mr. Webb chuckled at the notion, not only of beating the French, but of beating Marlborough too, and intercepting a convoy of three millions of French crowns, that were on their way to the generalissimo's insatiable pockets. When the general's lady went to the

queen's drawing-room, all the Tory women crowded round her with congratulations, and made her a train greater than the Duchess of Marlborough's own. Feasts were given to the general by all the chiefs of the Tory party, who vaunted him as the duke's equal in military skill; and perhaps used the worthy soldier as their instrument, whilst he thought they were but acknowledging his merits as a commander. As the general's aide de camp, and favourite officer, Mr. Esmond came in for a share of his chief's popularity, and was presented to her Majesty, and advanced to the rank of lieutenant-colonel, at the request of his grateful chief.—*The History of Henry Esmond.*

#### HOW A PRINCE TREATED HIS FRIENDS AND WHAT CAME OF IT

'We have a fine moonlight night for riding on,' says Esmond; 'Frank, we may reach Castlewood in time yet.' All the way along they made inquiries at the post-houses, when a tall young gentleman in a grey suit, with a light-brown periwig, just the colour of my lord's, had been seen to pass. He had set off at six that morning, and we at three in the afternoon. He rode almost as quickly as we had done; he was seven hours ahead of us still when we reached the last stage.

We rode over Castlewood Downs before the breaking of dawn. We passed the very spot where the car was upset fourteen years since, and Mohun lay. The village was not up yet, nor the forge lighted, as we rode through it, passing by the elms, where the rooks were still roosting, and by

the church, and over the bridge. We got off our horses at the bridge and walked up to the gate.

‘If she is safe,’ says Frank, trembling, and his honest eyes filling with tears, ‘a silver statue to Our Lady!’ He was going to rattle at the great iron knocker on the oak gate; but Esmond stopped his kinsman’s hand. He had his own fears, his own hopes, his own despairs and griefs, too; but he spoke not a word of these to his companion, or showed any signs of emotion. . . .

Frank sat down on a stone bench in the courtyard, and fairly fell asleep, while Esmond paced up and down the court, debating what should ensue. What mattered how much or how little had passed between the prince and the poor faithless girl? They were arrived in time perhaps to rescue her person, but not her mind; had she not instigated the young prince to come to her; suborned servants, dismissed others, so that she might communicate with him? The treacherous heart within her had surrendered, though the place was safe; and it was to win this that he had given a life’s struggle and devotion; this, that she was ready to give away for the bribe of a coronet or a wink of the prince’s eye.

When he had thought his thoughts out he shook up poor Frank from his sleep, who rose yawning, and said he had been dreaming of Clotilda. ‘You must back me,’ says Esmond, ‘in what I am going to do. I have been thinking that yonder scoundrel may have been instructed to tell that story, and that the whole of it may be a lie; if it be, we shall find it out from the gentleman who is asleep yonder. See if the door leading to my lady’s rooms’ (so we called the

rooms at the north-west angle of the house), 'see if the door is barred as he saith.' We tried; it was indeed as the lackey had said, closed within.

'It may have been open and shut afterwards,' says poor Esmond; 'the foundress of our family let our ancestor in in that way.'

'What will you do, Harry, if—if what that fellow saith should turn out untrue?' The young man looked scared and frightened into his kinsman's face; I dare say it wore no very pleasant expression.

'Let us first go see whether the two stories agree,' says Esmond; and went in at the passage and opened the door into what had been his own chamber now for wellnigh five-and-twenty years. A candle was still burning, and the prince asleep dressed on the bed—Esmond did not care for making a noise. The prince started up in his bed, seeing two men in his chamber: '*Qui est là?*' says he, and took a pistol from under his pillow.

'It is the Marquis of Esmond,' says the colonel, 'come to welcome his Majesty to his house of Castlewood, and to report of what hath happened in London. Pursuant to the king's orders, I passed the night before last, after leaving his Majesty, in waiting upon the friends of the king. It is a pity that his Majesty's desire to see the country and to visit our poor house should have caused the king to quit London without notice yesterday, when the opportunity happened which in all human probability may not occur again; and had the king not chosen to ride to Castlewood, the Prince of Wales might have slept at St. James's.'

'Sdeath! gentlemen,' says the prince, starting

off his bed, whereon he was lying in his clothes, 'the doctor was with me yesterday morning, and after watching by my sister all night, told me I might not hope to see the queen.'

'It would have been otherwise,' says Esmond, with another bow; 'as, by this time, the queen may be dead in spite of the doctor. The Council was met, a new treasurer was appointed, the troops were devoted to the king's cause; and fifty loyal gentlemen of the greatest names of this kingdom were assembled to accompany the Prince of Wales, who might have been the acknowledged heir of the throne, or the possessor of it by this time, had your Majesty not chosen to take the air. We were ready; there was only one person that failed us, your Majesty's gracious——'

'*Morbleu, monsieur*, you give me too much Majesty,' said the prince; who had now risen up and seemed to be looking to one of us to help him to his coat. But neither stirred.

'We shall take care,' says Esmond, 'not much oftener to offend in that particular.'

'What mean you, my lord?' says the prince, and muttered something about a *guet-à-pens*, which Esmond caught up.

'The snare, sir,' said he, 'was not of our laying; it is not we that invited you. We came to avenge, and not to compass, the dishonour of our family.'

'Dishonour! *Morbleu!* there has been no dishonour,' says the prince, turning scarlet, 'only a little harmless playing.'

'That was meant to end seriously.'

'I swear,' the prince broke out impetuously, 'upon the honour of a gentleman, my lords——'

'That we arrived in time. No wrong hath been

done, Frank,' says Colonel Esmond, turning round to young Castlewood, who stood at the door as the talk was going on. 'See! here is a paper whereon his Majesty hath deigned to commence some verses in honour, or dishonour, of Beatrix. Here is *madame* and *flamme*, *cruelle* and *rebelle*, and *amour* and *jour*, in the royal writing and spelling. Had the gracious lover been happy, he had not passed his time in sighing.' In fact, and actually as he was speaking, Esmond cast his eyes down towards the table, and saw a paper on which my young prince had been scrawling a madrigal, that was to finish his charmer on the morrow.

'Sir,' says the prince, burning with rage (he had assumed his royal coat unassisted by this time), 'did I come here to receive insults?'

'To confer them, may it please your Majesty,' says the colonel, with a very low bow, 'and the gentlemen of our family are come to thank you.'

'*Malédiction!*' says the young man, tears starting into his eyes with helpless rage and mortification. 'What will you with me, gentlemen?'

'If your Majesty will please to enter the next apartment,' says Esmond, preserving his grave tone, 'I have some papers there which I would gladly submit to you, and by your permission I will lead the way;' and, taking the taper up, and backing before the prince with very great ceremony, Mr. Esmond passed into the little chaplain's room, through which we had just entered into the house:—'Please to set a chair for his Majesty, Frank,' says the colonel to his companion, who wondered almost as much at this scene, and was as much puzzled by it, as the other actor in it. Then going to the crypt over the

mantelpiece, the colonel opened it, and drew thence the papers which so long had lain there.

‘Here, may it please your Majesty,’ says he, ‘is the patent of Marquis sent over by your royal father at St. Germains to Viscount Castlewood, my father: here is the witnessed certificate of my father’s marriage to my mother, and of my birth and christening; I was christened of that religion of which your sainted sire gave all through life so shining example. These are my titles, dear Frank, and this what I do with them: here go baptism and marriage, and here the marquise and the august sign-manual, with which your predecessor was pleased to honour our race.’ And as Esmond spoke he set the papers burning in the brazier. ‘You will please, sir, to remember,’ he continued, ‘that our family hath ruined itself by fidelity to yours: that my grandfather spent his estate, and gave his blood and his son to die for your service; that my dear lord’s grandfather (for lord you are now, Frank, by right and title too) died for the same cause; that my poor kinswoman, my father’s second wife, after giving away her honour to your wicked perjured race, sent all her wealth to the king; and got in return that precious title that lies in ashes, and this inestimable yard of blue ribbon. I lay this at your feet and stamp upon it: I draw this sword and break it and deny you; and, had you completed the wrong you designed us, by Heaven I would have driven it through your heart, and no more pardoned you than your father pardoned Monmouth. Frank will do the same, won’t you, cousin?’

Frank, who had been looking on with a stupid air at the papers as they flamed in the old brazier,

took out his sword and broke it, holding his head down:—‘I go with my cousin,’ says he, giving Esmond a grasp of the hand. ‘Marquis or not, by —, I stand by him any day. I beg your Majesty’s pardon for swearing; that is—that is—I’m for the Elector of Hanover. It’s all your Majesty’s own fault. The queen’s dead most likely by this time. And you might have been king if you hadn’t come dangling after ‘Trix.’

‘Thus to lose a crown,’ says the young prince, starting up, and speaking French in his eager way; ‘to lose the loveliest woman in the world; to lose the loyalty of such hearts as yours, is not this, my lords, enough of humiliation?—Marquis, if I go on my knees will you pardon me?—No, I can’t do that, but I can offer you reparation, that of honour, that of gentlemen. Favour me by crossing the sword with mine: yours is broke—see, yonder in the armoire are two;’ and the prince took them out as eager as a boy, and held them towards Esmond:—‘Ah! you will? *Merci, monsieur, merci!*’

Extremely touched by this immense mark of condescension and repentance for wrong done, Colonel Esmond bowed down so low as almost to kiss the gracious young hand that conferred on him such an honour, and took his guard in silence. The swords were no sooner met, than Castlewood knocked up Esmond’s, with the blade of his own, which he had broke off short at the shell; and the Colonel falling back a step dropped his point with another very low bow, and declared himself perfectly satisfied.

‘*Eh bien, vicomte!*’ says the young prince, who was a boy, and a French boy, ‘*il ne nous reste qu’une*’  
*one*

*chose à faire :*’ he placed his sword upon the table, and the fingers of his two hands upon his breast :— ‘ We have one more thing to do,’ says he ; ‘ you do not divine it ? ’ He stretched out his arms :— ‘ *Embrassons nous !* ’

The talk was scarce over when Beatrix entered the room :—What came she to seek there ? She started and turned pale at the sight of her brother and kinsman, drawn swords, broken sword-blades, and papers yet smouldering in the brazier.

‘ Charming Beatrix,’ says the prince, with a blush which became him very well, ‘ these lords have come a-horseback from London, where my sister lies in a despaired state, and where her successor makes himself desired. Pardon me for my escapade of last evening. I had been so long a prisoner, that I seized the occasion of a promenade on horseback, and my horse naturally bore me towards you. I found you a queen in your little court, where you deigned to entertain me. Present my homages to your maids of honour. I sighed as you slept, under the window of your chamber, and then retired to seek rest in my own. It was there that these gentlemen agreeably roused me. Yes, milords, for that is a happy day that makes a prince acquainted, at whatever cost to his vanity, with such a noble heart as that of the Marquis of Esmond. Mademoiselle, may we take your coach to town ? I saw it in the hangar, and this poor marquis must be dropping with sleep.’

‘ Will it please the king to breakfast before he goes ? ’ was all Beatrix could say. The roses had shuddered out of her cheeks ; her eyes were glaring ; she looked quite old. She came up to Esmond and hissed out a word or two :—‘ If I did

not love you before, cousin,' says she, 'think how I love you now.' If words could stab, no doubt she would have killed Esmond ; she looked at him as if she could.

But her keen words gave no wound to Mr. Esmond ; his heart was too hard. As he looked at her, he wondered that he could ever have loved her. His love of ten years was over ; it fell down dead on the spot, at the Kensington tavern, where Frank brought him the note out of *Eikon Basilike*. The prince blushed and bowed low, as she gazed at him, and quitted the chamber. I have never seen her from that day.—*Esmond*.

## CHARLES DICKENS

1812-70

### MR. PICKWICK IN THE POUND

It needed no second invitation to induce the party to yield full justice to the meal ; and as little pressing did it require to induce Mr. Weller, the long gamekeeper, and the two boys, to station themselves on the grass, at a little distance, and do good execution upon a decent proportion of the viands. An old oak afforded a pleasant shelter to the group, and a rich prospect of arable and meadow land, intersected with luxuriant hedges, and richly ornamented with wood, lay spread out before them.

'This is delightful—thoroughly delightful !' said Mr. Pickwick, the skin of whose expressive countenance was rapidly peeling off, with exposure to the sun.

‘So it is: so it is, old fellow,’ replied Wardle.  
 ‘Come; a glass of punch!’

‘With great pleasure,’ said Mr. Pickwick; the satisfaction of whose countenance, after drinking it, bore testimony to the sincerity of the reply.

‘Good,’ said Mr. Pickwick, smacking his lips.  
 ‘Very good. I’ll take another. Cool; very cool. Come, gentlemen,’ continued Mr. Pickwick, still retaining his hold upon the jar, ‘a toast. Our friends at Dingley Dell.’

The toast was drunk with loud acclamations.

‘I’ll tell you what I shall do, to get up my shooting again,’ said Mr. Winkle, who was eating bread and ham with a pocket-knife. ‘I’ll put a stuffed partridge on the top of a post, and practise at it, beginning at a short distance, and lengthening it by degrees. I understand it’s capital practice.’

‘I know a gen’l’mán, sir,’ said Mr. Weller, ‘as did that, and begun at two yards; but he never tried it on agin; for he blowed the bird right clean away at the first fire, and nobody ever seed a feather on him arterwards.’

‘Sam,’ said Mr. Pickwick.

‘Sir,’ replied Mr. Weller.

‘Have the goodness to reserve your anecdotes till they are called for.’

‘Cert’nly, sir.’

Here Mr. Weller winked the eye which was not concealed by the beer-can he was raising to his lips with such exquisiteness, that the two boys went into spontaneous convulsions, and even the long man condescended to smile.

‘Well that certainly is most capital cold punch,’ said Mr. Pickwick, looking earnestly at the stone

bottle ; ‘ and the day is extremely warm, and—Tupman, my dear friend, a glass of punch ? ’

‘ With the greatest delight,’ replied Mr. Tupman ; and having drank that glass, Mr. Pickwick took another, just to see whether there was any orange peel in the punch, because orange peel always disagreed with him ; and finding there was not, Mr. Pickwick took another glass to the health of their absent friend, and then felt himself imperatively called upon to propose another in honour of the punch-compounder, unknown.

This constant succession of glasses produced considerable effect upon Mr. Pickwick ; his countenance beamed with the most sunny smiles, laughter played around his lips, and good-humoured merriment twinkled in his eye. Yielding by degrees to the influence of the exciting liquid, rendered more so by the heat, Mr. Pickwick expressed a strong desire to recollect a song which he had heard in his infancy, and the attempt proving abortive, sought to stimulate his memory with more glasses of punch, which appeared to have quite a contrary effect ; for, from forgetting the words of the song, he began to forget how to articulate any words at all ; and finally, after rising to his legs to address the company in an eloquent speech, he fell into the barrow, and fast asleep, simultaneously.

The basket having been repacked, and it being found perfectly impossible to awaken Mr. Pickwick from his torpor, some discussion took place whether it would be better for Mr. Weller to wheel his master back again, or to leave him where he was, until they should all be ready to return. The latter course was at length decided on ; and as the further expedition was not to exceed an hour’s duration,

and as Mr. Weller begged very hard to be one of the party, it was determined to leave Mr. Pickwick asleep in the barrow, and to call for him on their return. So away they went, leaving Mr. Pickwick snoring most comfortably in the shade.

That Mr. Pickwick would have continued to snore in the shade until his friends came back, or, in default thereof, until the shades of evening had fallen on the landscape, there appears no reasonable cause to doubt ; always supposing that he had been suffered to remain there in peace. But he was not suffered to remain there in peace. And this was what prevented him.

Captain Boldwig was a little fierce man in a stiff black neckerchief and blue surtout, who, when he did condescend to walk about his property, did it in company with a thick rattan stick with a brass ferrule, and a gardener and sub-gardener with meek faces, to whom (the gardeners, not the stick) Captain Boldwig gave his orders with all due grandeur and ferocity : for Captain Boldwig's sister had married a Marquis, and the Captain's house was a villa, and his land 'grounds', and it was all very high, and mighty, and great.

Mr. Pickwick had not been asleep half an hour when little Captain Boldwig, followed by the two gardeners, came striding along as fast as his size and importance would let him : and when he came near the oak tree, Captain Boldwig paused, and drew a long breath, and looked at the prospect as if he thought the prospect ought to be highly gratified at having him to take notice of it ; and then he struck the ground emphatically with his stick, and summoned the head gardener.

'Hunt,' said Captain Boldwig.

‘Yes, sir,’ said the gardener.

‘Roll this place to-morrow morning—do you hear, Hunt?’

‘Yes, sir.’

‘And take care that you keep me this place in good order—do you hear, Hunt?’

‘Yes, sir.’

‘And remind me to have a board done about trespassers, and spring guns, and all that sort of thing, to keep the common people out. Do you hear, Hunt; do you hear?’

‘I’ll not forget it, sir.’

‘I beg your pardon, sir,’ said the other man, advancing, with his hand to his hat.

‘Well, Wilkins, what’s the matter with *you*?’ said Captain Boldwig.

‘I beg your pardon, sir—but I think there have been trespassers here to-day.’

‘Ha!’ said the Captain, scowling around him.

‘Yes, sir—they have been dining here, I think, sir.’

‘Why, confound their audacity, so they have,’ said Captain Boldwig, as the crumbs and fragments that were strewn upon the grass met his eye. ‘They have actually been devouring their food here. I wish I had the vagabonds here!’ said the Captain, clenching the thick stick.

‘I wish I had the vagabonds here,’ said the Captain, wrathfully.

‘Beg your pardon, sir,’ said Wilkins, ‘but—’

‘But what? Eh?’ roared the Captain; and following the timid glance of Wilkins, his eyes encountered the wheelbarrow and Mr. Pickwick.

‘Who are you, you rascal?’ said the Captain, administering several pokes to Mr. Pickwick’s body with the thick stick. ‘What’s your name?’

‘Cold punch,’ murmured Mr. Pickwick, as he sunk to sleep again.

‘What?’ demanded Captain Boldwig.

No reply.

‘What did he say his name was?’ asked the Captain.

‘Punch, I think, sir,’ replied Wilkins.

‘That’s his impudence, that’s his confounded impudence,’ said Captain Boldwig. ‘He’s only feigning to be asleep now,’ said the Captain, in a high passion. ‘He’s drunk; he’s a drunken plebeian. Wheel him away, Wilkins, wheel him away directly.’

‘Where shall I wheel him to, sir?’ inquired Wilkins, with great timidity.

‘Wheel him to the Devil,’ replied Captain Boldwig.

‘Very well, sir,’ said Wilkins.

‘Stay,’ said the Captain.

Wilkins stopped accordingly.

‘Wheel him,’ said the Captain, ‘wheel him to the pound; and let us see whether he calls himself Punch when he comes to himself. He shall not bully me, he shall not bully me. Wheel him away.’

Away Mr. Pickwick was wheeled in compliance with this imperious mandate; and the great Captain Boldwig, swelling with indignation, proceeded on his walk.

Inexpressible was the astonishment of the little party when they returned, to find that Mr. Pickwick had disappeared, and taken the wheelbarrow with him. It was the most mysterious and unaccountable thing that was ever heard of. For a lame man to have got upon his legs without any previous notice, and walked off, would have been

most extraordinary ; but when it came to his wheeling a heavy barrow before him, by way of amusement, it grew positively miraculous. They searched every nook and corner round, together and separately ; they shouted, whistled, laughed, called—and all with the same result. Mr. Pickwick was not to be found. After some hours of fruitless search, they arrived at the unwelcome conclusion that they must go home without him.

Meanwhile Mr. Pickwick had been wheeled to the Pound, and safely deposited therein, fast asleep in the wheelbarrow, to the immeasurable delight and satisfaction, not only of all the boys in the village, but three-fourths of the whole population, who had gathered round, in expectation of his waking. If their most intense gratification had been excited by seeing him wheeled in, how many hundred-fold was their joy increased when, after a few indistinct cries of ‘ Sam ! ’ he sat up in the barrow, and gazed with indescribable astonishment on the faces before him.

A general shout was of course the signal of his having woke up ; and his involuntary inquiry of ‘ What ’s the matter ? ’ occasioned another, louder than the first, if possible.

‘ Here ’s a game ! ’ roared the populace.

‘ Where am I ? ’ exclaimed Mr. Pickwick.

‘ In the Pound,’ replied the mob.

‘ How came I here ? What was I doing ? Where was I brought from ? ’

‘ Boldwig ! Captain Boldwig ! ’ was the only reply.

‘ Let me out,’ cried Mr. Pickwick. ‘ Where ’s my servant ? Where are my friends ? ’

‘ You an’t got no friends. Hurrah ! ’ Then

there came a turnip, then a potato, and then an egg: with a few other little tokens of the playful disposition of the many-headed.

How long this scene might have lasted, or how much Mr. Pickwick might have suffered, no one can tell, had not a carriage, which was driving swiftly by, suddenly pulled up, from whence there descended old Wardle and Sam Weller, the former of whom, in far less time than it takes to write it, if not to read it, had made his way to Mr. Pickwick's side, and placed him in the vehicle, just as the latter had concluded the third and last round of a single combat with the town-beadle.

'Run to the Justice's!' cried a dozen voices.

'Ah, run away,' said Mr. Weller, jumping up on the box. 'Give my compliments—Mr. Weller's compliments—to the Justice, and tell him I've spiled his beadle, and that, if he'll sveal in a new 'un, I'll come back agin to-morrow and spile him. Drive on, old feller.'

'I'll give directions for the commencement of an action for false imprisonment against this Captain Boldwig, directly I get to London,' said Mr. Pickwick, as soon as the carriage turned out of the town.

'We were trespassing, it seems,' said Wardle.

'I don't care,' said Mr. Pickwick, 'I'll bring the action.'

'No, you won't,' said Wardle.

'I will, by —'! but as there was a humorous expression in Wardle's face, Mr. Pickwick checked himself, and said: 'Why not?'

'Because,' said old Wardle, half-bursting with laughter, 'because they might turn round on some of us, and say we had taken too much cold punch.'

Do what he would, a smile would come into

Mr. Pickwick's face; the smile extended into a laugh; the laugh into a roar; the roar became general. So, to keep up their good humour, they stopped at the first roadside tavern they came to, and ordered a glass of brandy and water all round, with a magnum of extra strength for Mr. Samuel Weller.—*Pickwick Papers*.

### MARK TAPLEY AND MRS. LUPIN

IN the meantime Mark, having a shrewd notion that his mistress was in very low spirits, and that he could not exactly answer for the consequences of any lengthened *tête-à-tête* in the bar, kept himself obstinately out of her way all the afternoon and evening. In this piece of generalship he was very much assisted by the great influx of company into the tap-room; for the news of his intention having gone abroad, there was a perfect throng there all the evening, and much drinking of healths and clinking of mugs. At length the house was closed for the night; and there being now no help for it, Mark put the best face he could upon the matter, and walked doggedly to the bar-door.

'If I look at her,' said Mark to himself, 'I'm done. I feel that I'm a-going fast.'

'You have come at last,' said Mrs. Lupin.

Aye, Mark said: There he was.

'And you are determined to leave us, Mark?' cried Mrs. Lupin.

'Why, yes; I am,' said Mark; keeping his eyes hard upon the floor.

'I thought,' pursued the landlady, with a most engaging hesitation, 'that you had been—fond—of the Dragon?'

‘ So I am,’ said Mark.

‘ Then,’ pursued the hostess : and it really was not an unnatural inquiry : ‘ why do you desert it ? ’

But as he gave no manner of answer to this question ; not even on its being repeated ; Mrs. Lupin put his money into his hand, and asked him—not unkindly, quite the contrary—what he would take ?

It is proverbial that there are certain things which flesh and blood cannot bear. Such a question as this, propounded in such a manner, at such a time, and by such a person, proved (at least, as far as Mark’s flesh and blood were concerned) to be one of them. He looked up in spite of himself directly ; and having once looked up, there was no looking down again ; for of all the tight, plump, buxom, bright-eyed, dimple-faced landladies that ever shone on earth, there stood before him then, bodily in that bar, the very pink and pineapple.

‘ Why, I tell you what,’ said Mark, throwing off all his constraint in an instant, and seizing the hostess round the waist : at which she was not at all alarmed, for she knew what a good young man he was : ‘ if I took what I liked most, I should take you. If I only thought what was best for me, I should take you. If I took what nineteen young fellows in twenty would be glad to take, and would take at any price, I should take you. Yes, I should,’ cried Mr. Tapley, shaking his head expressively enough, and looking (in a momentary state of forgetfulness) rather hard at the hostess’s ripe lips. ‘ And no man wouldn’t wonder if I did ! ’

Mrs. Lupin said he amazed her. She was

astonished how he could say such things. She had never thought it of him.

‘Why, I never thought it of myself till now!’ said Mark, raising his eyebrows with a look of the merriest possible surprise. ‘I always expected we should part, and never have no explanation: I meant to do it when I come in here just now; but there’s something about you, as makes a man sensible. Then let us have a word or two together: letting it be understood beforehand,’ he added this in a grave tone, to prevent the possibility of any mistake, ‘that I’m not a-going to make no love, you know.’

There was for just one second a shade, though not by any means a dark one, on the landlady’s open brow. But it passed off instantly, in a laugh that came from her very heart.

‘Oh, very good!’ she said; ‘if there is to be no love-making, you had better take your arm away.’

‘Lord, why should I!’ cried Mark. ‘It’s quite innocent.’

‘Of course it’s innocent,’ returned the hostess, ‘or I shouldn’t allow it.’

‘Very well!’ said Mark. ‘Then let it be.’

There was so much reason in this that the landlady laughed again, suffered it to remain, and bade him say what he had to say, and be quick about it. But he was an impudent fellow, she added.

‘Ha ha! I almost think I am!’ cried Mark, ‘though I never thought so before. Why, I can say anything to-night!’

‘Say what you’re going to say if you please, and be quick,’ returned the landlady, ‘for I want to get to bed.’

‘Why, then, my dear good soul,’ said Mark, ‘and a kinder woman than you are never drawed breath—let me see the man as says she did!—what would be the likely consequence of us two being—’

‘Oh nonsense!’ cried Mrs. Lupin. ‘Don’t talk about that any more.’

‘No, no, but it an’t nonsense,’ said Mark; ‘and I wish you’d attend. What would be the likely consequence of us two being married? If I can’t be content and comfortable in this here lively Dragon now, is it to be looked for as I should be then? By no means. Very good. Then you, even with your good humour, would be always on the fret and worrit, always uncomfortable in your own mind, always a-thinking as you was getting too old for my taste, always a-picturing me to yourself as being chained up to the Dragon door, and wanting to break away. I don’t know that it would be so,’ said Mark, ‘but I don’t know that it mightn’t be. I *am* a roving sort of chap, I know. I’m fond of change. I’m always a-thinking that with my good health and spirits it would be more creditable in me to be jolly where there’s things a-going on to make one dismal. It may be a mistake of mine, you see, but nothing short of trying how it acts will set it right. Then an’t it best that I should go: particular when your free way has helped me out to say all this, and we can part as good friends as we have ever been since first I entered this here noble Dragon, which,’ said Mr. Tapley in conclusion, ‘has my good word and my good wish to the day of my death!’

The hostess sat quite silent for a little time, but she very soon put both her hands in Mark’s and shook them heartily.

‘For you are a good man,’ she said; looking into his face with a smile, which was rather serious for her. ‘And I do believe have been a better friend to me to-night than ever I have had in all my life.’

‘Oh! as to that, you know,’ said Mark, ‘that’s nonsense. But love my heart alive!’ he added, looking at her in a sort of rapture, ‘if you *are* that way disposed, what a lot of suitable husbands there is as you may drive distracted!’

She laughed again at this compliment; and, once more shaking him by both hands, and bidding him, if he should ever want a friend, to remember her, turned gaily from the little bar and up the Dragon staircase.

‘Humming a tune as she goes,’ said Mark, listening, ‘in case I should think she’s at all put out, and should be made down-hearted. Come, here’s some credit in being jolly, at last!’

With that piece of comfort, very ruefully uttered, he went, in anything but a jolly manner, to bed.

He rose early next morning, and was a-foot soon after sunrise. But it was of no use; the whole place was up to see Mark Tapley off: the boys, the dogs, the children, the old men, the busy people and the idlers: there they were, all calling out ‘Good-by’e, Mark,’ after their own manner, and all sorry he was going. Somehow he had a kind of sense that his old mistress was peeping from her chamber-window, but he couldn’t make up his mind to look back.

‘Good-by’e one, good-by’e all!’ cried Mark, waving his hat on the top of his walking-stick, as he strode at a quick pace up the little street. ‘Hearty chaps them wheelwrights—hurrah!’

Here's the butcher's dog a-coming out of the garden—down, old fellow ! And Mr. Pinch a-going to his organ—good-by'e, sir ! And the terrier-bitch from over the way—hie, then, lass ! And children enough to hand down human natur to the latest posterity—good-by'e, boys and girls ! There's some credit in it now. I'm a-coming out strong at last. These are the circumstances that would try a ordinary mind ; but I'm uncommon jolly. Not quite as jolly as I could wish to be, but very near. Good-by'e ! good-by'e !'—*Martin Chuzzlewit.*

## MRS. GAMP

### i. MR. PECKSNIFF VISITS MRS. GAMP

MR. PECKSNIFF was in a hackney cabriolet, for Jonas Chuzzlewit had said 'Spare no expense.' Mankind is evil in its thoughts and in its base constructions, and Jonas was resolved it should not have an inch to stretch into an ell against him. It never should be charged upon his father's son that he had grudged the money for his father's funeral. Hence, until the obsequies should be concluded, Jonas had taken for his motto 'Spend, and spare not !'

Mr. Pecksniff had been to the undertaker, and was now upon his way to another officer in the train of mourning : a female functionary, a nurse, and watcher, and performer of nameless offices about the persons of the dead : whom he had recommended. Her name, as Mr. Pecksniff gathered from a scrap of writing in his hand, was Gamp ; her residence in Kingsgate Street, High Holborn. So Mr. Pecksniff, in a hackney cab, was rattling over Holborn stones, in quest of Mrs. Gamp.

This lady lodged at a bird-fancier's, next door but one to the celebrated mutton-pie shop, and directly opposite to the original cat's-meat warehouse; the renown of which establishments was duly heralded on their respective fronts. It was a little house, and this was the more convenient; for Mrs. Gamp being, in her highest walk of art, a monthly nurse, or, as her sign-board boldly had it, 'Midwife,' and lodging in the first-floor front, was easily assailable at night by pebbles, walking-sticks, and fragments of tobacco-pipe: all much more efficacious than the street-door knocker, which was so constructed as to wake the street with ease, and even spread alarms of fire in Holborn, without making the smallest impression on the premises to which it was addressed.

It chanced on this particular occasion, that Mrs. Gamp had been up all the previous night, in attendance upon a ceremony to which the usage of gossips has given that name which expresses, in two syllables, the curse pronounced on Adam. It chanced that Mrs. Gamp had not been regularly engaged, but had been called in at a crisis, in consequence of her great repute, to assist another professional lady with her advice; and thus it happened that, all points of interest in the case being over, Mrs. Gamp had come home again to the bird-fancier's, and gone to bed. So when Mr. Pecksniff drove up in the hackney cab, Mrs. Gamp's curtains were drawn close, and Mrs. Gamp was fast asleep behind them.

If the bird-fancier had been at home, as he ought to have been, there would have been no great harm in this; but he was out, and his shop was closed. The shutters were down certainly;

and in every pane of glass there was at least one tiny bird in a tiny bird-cage, twittering and hopping his little ballet of despair, and knocking his head against the roof: while one unhappy goldfinch who lived outside a red villa with his name on the door, drew the water for his own drinking, and mutely appealed to some good man to drop a farthing's-worth of poison in it. Still, the door was shut. Mr. Pecksniff tried the latch, and shook it, causing a cracked bell inside to ring most mournfully; but no one came. The bird-fancier was an easy shaver also, and a fashionable hair-dresser also; and perhaps he had been sent for, express, from the court end of the town, to trim a lord, or cut and curl a lady: but however that might be, there, upon his own ground, he was not; nor was there any more distinct trace of him to assist the imagination of an inquirer, than a professional print or emblem of his calling (much favoured in the trade), representing a hair-dresser of easy manners curling a lady of distinguished fashion, in the presence of a patent upright grand pianoforte.

Noting these circumstances, Mr. Pecksniff, in the innocence of his heart, applied himself to the knocker; but at the first double knock every window in the street became alive with female heads; and before he could repeat the performance whole troops of married ladies (some about to trouble Mrs. Gamp themselves very shortly) came flocking round the steps, all crying out with one accord, and with uncommon interest, 'Knock at the winder, sir, knock at the winder. Lord bless you, don't lose no more time than you can help; knock at the winder!'

Acting upon this suggestion, and borrowing the driver's whip for the purpose, Mr. Pecksniff soon made a commotion among the first-floor flower-pots, and roused Mrs. Gamp, whose voice—to the great satisfaction of the matrons—was heard to say, 'I'm coming.'

'He's as pale as a muffin,' said one lady, in allusion to Mr. Pecksniff.

'So he ought to be, if he's the feelings of a man,' observed another.

A third lady (with her arms folded) said she wished he had chosen any other time for fetching Mrs. Gamp, but it always happened so with *her*.

It gave Mr. Pecksniff much uneasiness to find, from these remarks, that he was supposed to have come to Mrs. Gamp upon an errand touching—not the close of life, but the other end. Mrs. Gamp herself was under the same impression, for, throwing open the window, she cried behind the curtains, as she hastily attired herself:

'Is it Mrs. Perkins?'

'No!' returned Mr. Pecksniff, sharply. 'Nothing of the sort.'

'What, Mr. Whilks!' cried Mrs. Gamp. 'Don't say it's you, Mr. Whilks, and that poor creetur Mrs. Whilks with not even a pincushion ready. Don't say it's you, Mr. Whilks!'

'It isn't Mr. Whilks,' said Pecksniff. 'I don't know the man. Nothing of the kind. A gentleman is dead; and some person being wanted in the house, you have been recommended by Mr. Mould the undertaker.'

As she was by this time in a condition to appear, Mrs. Gamp, who had a face for all occasions, looked out of the window with her mourning countenance,

and said she would be down directly. But the matrons took it very ill that Mr. Pecksniff's mission was of so unimportant a kind ; and the lady with her arms folded rated him in good round terms, signifying that she would be glad to know what he meant by terrifying delicate females ' with his corpses ; ' and giving it as her opinion that he was quite ugly enough to know better. The other ladies were not at all behind-hand in expressing similar sentiments ; and the children, of whom some scores had now collected, hooted and defied Mr. Pecksniff quite savagely. So when Mrs. Gamp appeared, the unoffending gentlemen was glad to hustle her with very little ceremony into the cabriolet, and drive off, overwhelmed with popular execration.

Mrs. Gamp had a large bundle with her, a pair of pattens, and a species of gig umbrella ; the latter article in colour like a faded leaf, except where a circular patch of a lively blue had been dexterously let in at the top. She was much flurried by the haste she had made, and laboured under the most erroneous views of cabriolets, which she appeared to confound with mail-coaches or stage-waggons, inasmuch as she was constantly endeavouring for the first half mile to force her luggage through the little front window, and clamouring to the driver to ' put it in the boot.' When she was disabused of this idea, her whole being resolved itself into an absorbing anxiety about her pattens, with which she played innumerable games at quoits on Mr. Pecksniff's legs. It was not until they were close upon the house of mourning that she had enough composure to observe :

‘And so the gentleman’s dead, sir! Ah! The more’s the pity.’ She didn’t even know his name. ‘But it’s what we must all come to. It’s as certain as being born, except that we can’t make our calculations as exact. Ah! Poor dear!’

She was a fat old woman, this Mrs. Gamp, with a husky voice and a moist eye, which she had a remarkable power of turning up, and only showing the white of it. Having very little neck, it cost her some trouble to look over herself, if one may say so, at those to whom she talked. She wore a very rusty black gown, rather the worse for snuff, and a shawl and bonnet to correspond. In these dilapidated articles of dress she had, on principle, arrayed herself, time out of mind, on such occasions as the present; for this at once expressed a decent amount of veneration for the deceased, and invited the next of kin to present her with a fresher suit of weeds: an appeal so frequently successful, that the very fetch and ghost of Mrs. Gamp, bonnet and all, might be seen hanging up, any hour in the day, in at least a dozen of the second-hand clothes shops about Holborn. The face of Mrs. Gamp—the nose in particular—was somewhat red and swollen, and it was difficult to enjoy her society without becoming conscious of a smell of spirits. Like most persons who have attained to great eminence in their profession, she took to hers very kindly; insomuch that, setting aside her natural predilections as a woman, she went to a lying-in or a laying-out with equal zest and relish.

‘Ah!’ repeated Mrs. Gamp; for it was always a safe sentiment in cases of mourning. ‘Ah dear! When Gamp was summoned to his long home, and I see him a-lying in Guy’s Hospital with a penny-

piece on each eye, and his wooden leg under his left arm, I thought I should have fainted away. But I bore up.'

If certain whispers current in the Kingsgate Street circles had any truth in them, she had indeed borne up surprisingly; and had exerted such uncommon fortitude as to dispose of Mr. Gamp's remains for the benefit of science. But it should be added, in fairness, that this had happened twenty years before; and that Mr. and Mrs. Gamp had long been separated on the ground of incompatibility of temper in their drink.

'You have become indifferent since then, I suppose?' said Mr. Pecksniff. 'Use is second nature, Mrs. Gamp.'

'You may well say second natur, sir,' returned that lady. 'One's first ways is to find sich things a trial to the feelings, and so is one's lasting custom. If it wasn't for the nerve a little sip of liquor gives me (I never was able to do more than taste it), I never could go through with what I sometimes has to do. "Mrs. Harris," I says, at the very last case as ever I acted in, which it was but a young person, "Mrs. Harris," I says, "leave the bottle on the chimley-piece, and don't ask me to take none, but let me put my lips to it when I am so dispoged, and then I will do what I'm engaged to do, according to the best of my ability." "Mrs. Gamp," she says, in answer, "if ever there was a sober creetur to be got at eighteen pence a day for working people, and three and six for gentlefolks—night watching,"' said Mrs. Gamp, with emphasis, "'being a extra charge—you are that inwallable person.'" "Mrs. Harris," I says to her, "don't name the charge, for if I could afford

to lay all my feller creeturs out for nothink, I would gladly do it, sich is the love I bears 'em. But what I always says to them as has the management of matters, Mrs. Harris : " ' here she kept her eye on Mr. Pecksniff : " be they gents or be they ladies, is, don't ask me whether I won't take none, or whether I will, but leave the bottle on the chimley-piece, and let me put my lips to it when I am so dispoged." '—*Martin Chuzzlewit.*

## ii. MRS. GAMP VISITS MR. MOULD

' Tell Mrs. Gamp to come up-stairs,' said Mould. ' Now, Mrs. Gamp, what's *your* news ? '

The lady in question was by this time in the doorway, curtseying to Mrs. Mould. At the same moment a peculiar fragrance was borne upon the breeze, as if a passing fairy had hiccoughed, and had previously been to a wine-vaults.

Mrs. Gamp made no response to Mr. Mould, but curtseyed to Mrs. Mould again, and held up her hands and eyes, as in a devout thanksgiving that she looked so well. She was neatly, but not gaudily attired, in the weeds she had worn when Mr. Pecksniff had the pleasure of making her acquaintance ; and was perhaps the turning of a scale more snuffy.

' There are some happy creeturs,' Mrs. Gamp observed, ' as time runs back'ards with, and you are one, Mrs. Mould ; not that he need do nothing except use you in his most owldacious way for years to come, I'm sure ; for young you are and will be. I says to Mrs. Harris,' Mrs. Gamp continued, ' only t'other day ; the last Monday evening fortnight as ever dawned upon this Piljian's Projiss of a mortal wale ; I says to Mrs. Harris

when she says to me, "Years and our trials, Mrs. Gamp, sets marks upon us all."—"Say not the words, Mrs. Harris, if you and me is to be continual friends, for sech is not the case. Mrs. Mould," I says, making so free, I will confess, as use the name,' (she curtseyed here,) "' is one of them that goes agen the obserwation straight; and never, Mrs. Harris, whilst I've a drop of breath to draw, will I set by, and not stand up, don't think it."—"I ast your pardon, ma'am," says Mrs. Harris, "and I humbly grant your grace; for if ever a woman lived as would see her feller creeturs into fits to serve her friends, well do I know that woman's name is Sairey Gamp."'

At this point she was fain to stop for breath; and advantage may be taken of the circumstance, to state that a fearful mystery surrounded this lady of the name of Harris, whom no one in the circle of Mrs. Gamp's acquaintance had ever seen; neither did any human being know her place of residence, though Mrs. Gamp appeared on her own showing to be in constant communication with her. There were conflicting rumours on the subject; but the prevalent opinion was that she was a phantom of Mrs. Gamp's brain—as Messrs. Doe and Roe are fictions of the law—created for the express purpose of holding visionary dialogues with her on all manner of subjects, and invariably winding up with a compliment to the excellence of her nature.

'And likeways what a pleasure,' said Mrs. Gamp, turning with a tearful smile towards the daughters, 'to see them two young ladies as I know'd afore a tooth in their pretty heads was cut, and have many a day seen—ah, the sweet creeturs!—playing at berryins down in the shop, and follerin' the order-

book to its long home in the iron safe ! But that's all past and over, Mr. Mould ; ' as she thus got in a carefully regulated routine to that gentleman, she shook her head waggishly ; ' That's all past and over now, sir, an't it ? '

' Changes, Mrs. Gamp, changes ! ' returned the undertaker.

' More changes too, to come, afore we've done with changes, sir,' said Mrs. Gamp, nodding yet more waggishly than before. ' Young ladies with such faces thinks of something else besides berryins, don't they, sir ? '

' I am sure I don't know, Mrs. Gamp,' said Mould, with a chuckle—' Not bad in Mrs. Gamp, my dear ? '

' Oh yes, you do know, sir ! ' said Mrs. Gamp, ' and so does Mrs. Mould, your ansome pardner too, sir ; and so do I, although the blessing of a daughter was deniged me ; which, if we had had one, Gamp would certainly have drunk its little shoes right off its feet, as with our precious boy he did, and arterwards send the child a errand to sell his wooden leg for any money it would fetch as matches in the rough, and bring it home in liquor : which was truly done beyond his years, for ev'ry individgle penny that child lost at toss or buy for kidney ones ; and come home arterwards quite bold, to break the news, and offering to drown himself if that would be a satisfaction to his parents.—Oh yes, you do know, sir,' said Mrs. Gamp, wiping her eye with her shawl, and resuming the thread of her discourse. ' There's something besides births and berryins in the newspapers, an't there, Mr. Mould ? '

Mr. Mould winked at Mrs. Mould, whom he had

by this time taken on his knee, and said : ' No doubt. A good deal more, Mrs. Gamp. Upon my life, Mrs. Gamp is very far from bad, my dear ! '

' There's marryings, an't there, sir ? ' said Mrs. Gamp, while both the daughters blushed and tittered. ' Bless their precious hearts, and well they knows it ! Well you know'd it too, and well did Mrs. Mould, when you was at their time of life ! But my opinion is, you're all of one age now. For as to you and Mrs. Mould, sir, ever having grandchildren——'

' Oh ! Fie, fie ! Nonsense, Mrs. Gamp,' replied the undertaker. ' Devilish smart, though. Capital ! ' This was in a whisper. ' My dear '—aloud again—' Mrs. Gamp can drink a glass of rum, I dare say. Sit down, Mrs. Gamp, sit down.'

Mrs. Gamp took the chair that was nearest the door, and casting up her eyes towards the ceiling, feigned to be wholly insensible to the fact of a glass of rum being in preparation, until it was placed in her hand by one of the young ladies, when she exhibited the greatest surprise.

' A thing,' she said, ' as hardly ever, Mrs. Mould, occurs with me unless it is when I am indisposed, and find my half a pint of porter settling heavy on the chest. Mrs. Harris often and often says to me, " Sairey Gamp," she says, " you raly do amaze me ! " " Mrs. Harris," I says to her, " why so ? Give it a name, I beg." " Telling the truth then, ma'am," says Mrs. Harris, " and shaming him as shall be nameless betwixt you and me, never did I think till I know'd you, as any woman could sick-nurse and monthly likeways, on the little that you takes to drink." " Mrs. Harris," I says to her, " none on us knows what we can do till we tries ;

and wunst, when me and Gamp kept ouse, I thought so too. But now," I says, "my half a pint of porter fully satisfies; perwisin', Mrs. Harris, that it is brought reg'lar, and draw'd mild. Whether I sick or monthlies, ma'am, I hope I does my duty, but I am but a poor woman, and I earns my living hard; therefore I *do* require it, which I makes confession, to be brought reg'lar and draw'd mild."'

The precise connexion between these observations and the glass of rum, did not appear; for Mrs. Gamp proposing as a toast 'The best of lucks to all!' took off the dram in quite a scientific manner, without any further remarks.—*Martin Chuzzlewit*.

### iii. BETSEY PRIG VISITS MRS. GAMP

Mrs. Gamp's apartment in Kingsgate Street, High Holborn, wore, metaphorically speaking, a robe of state. It was swept and garnished for the reception of a visitor. That visitor was Betsey Prig: Mrs. Prig, of Bartlemy's: or as some said Barklemy's, or as some said Bardlemy's; for by all these endearing and familiar appellations, had the hospital of Saint Bartholomew become a household word among the sisterhood which Betsey Prig adorned.

Mrs. Gamp's apartment was not a spacious one, but, to a contented mind, a closet is a palace; and the first-floor front at Mr. Sweedlepipe's may have been, in the imagination of Mrs. Gamp, a stately pile. If it were not exactly that, to restless intellects, it at least comprised as much accommodation as any person, not sanguine to

insanity, could have looked for in a room of its dimensions. For only keep the bedstead always in your mind ; and you were safe. That was the grand secret. Remembering the bedstead, you might even stoop to look under the little round table for anything you had dropped, without hurting yourself much against the chest of drawers, or qualifying as a patient of Saint Bartholomew, by falling into the fire.

Visitors were much assisted in their cautious efforts to preserve an unflagging recollection of this piece of furniture, by its size : which was great. It was not a turn-up bedstead, nor yet a French bedstead, nor yet a four-post bedstead, but what is poetically called a tent : the sacking whereof was low and bulgy, insomuch that Mrs. Gamp's box would not go under it, but stopped half-way, in a manner which, while it did violence to the reason, likewise endangered the legs of a stranger. The frame too, which would have supported the canopy and hangings if there had been any, was ornamented with divers pippins carved in timber, which on the slightest provocation, and frequently on none at all, came tumbling down ; harassing the peaceful guest with inexplicable terrors.

The bed itself was decorated with a patchwork quilt of great antiquity ; and at the upper end, upon the side nearest to the door, hung a scanty curtain of blue check, which prevented the Zephyrs that were abroad in Kingsgate Street, from visiting Mrs. Gamp's head too roughly. Some rusty gowns and other articles of that lady's wardrobe depended from the posts ; and these had so adapted themselves by long usage to her figure, that more than

one impatient husband coming in precipitately, at about the time of twilight, had been for an instant stricken dumb by the supposed discovery that Mrs. Gamp had hanged herself. One gentleman, coming on the usual hasty errand, had said indeed, that they looked like guardian angels 'watching of her in her sleep'. But that, as Mrs. Gamp said, 'was his first;' and he never repeated the sentiment, though he often repeated his visit.

The chairs in Mrs. Gamp's apartment were extremely large and broad-backed, which was more than a sufficient reason for there being but two in number. They were both elbow-chairs, of ancient mahogany; and were chiefly valuable for the slippery nature of their seats, which had been originally horsehair, but were now covered with a shiny substance of a bluish tint, from which the visitor began to slide away with a dismayed countenance, immediately after sitting down. What Mrs. Gamp wanted in chairs she made up in bandboxes; of which she had a great collection, devoted to the reception of various miscellaneous valuables, which were not, however, as well protected as the good woman, by a pleasant fiction, seemed to think: for, though every bandbox had a carefully closed lid, not one among them had a bottom: owing to which cause the property within was merely, as it were, extinguished. The chest of drawers having been originally made to stand upon the top of another chest, had a dwarfish, elfin look, alone; but in regard of its security it had a great advantage over the bandboxes, for as all the handles had been long ago pulled off, it was very difficult to get at its contents. This indeed was only to be done by one of two devices;

either by tilting the whole structure forward until all the drawers fell out together, or by opening them singly with knives, like oysters.

Mrs. Gamp stored all her household matters in a little cupboard by the fire-place; beginning below the surface (as in nature) with the coals, and mounting gradually upwards to the spirits, which, from motives of delicacy, she kept in a tea-pot. The chimney-piece was ornamented with a small almanack, marked here and there in Mrs. Gamp's own hand with a memorandum of the date at which some lady was expected to fall due. It was also embellished with three profiles: one, in colours, of Mrs. Gamp herself in early life; one, in bronze, of a lady in feathers, supposed to be Mrs. Harris, as she appeared when dressed for a ball; and one, in black, of Mr. Gamp, deceased. The last was a full length, in order that the likeness might be rendered more obvious and forcible by the introduction of the wooden leg.

A pair of bellows, a pair of pattens, a toasting-fork, a kettle, a pap-boat, a spoon for the administration of medicine to the refractory, and lastly, Mrs. Gamp's umbrella, which as something of great price and rarity, was displayed with particular ostentation, completed the decorations of the chimney-piece and adjacent wall. Towards these objects Mrs. Gamp raised her eyes in satisfaction when she had arranged the tea-board, and had concluded her arrangements for the reception of Betsey Prig, even unto the setting forth of two pounds of Newcastle salmon, intensely pickled.

'There! Now drat you, Betsey, don't be long!' said Mrs. Gamp, apostrophizing her absent friend. 'For I can't abear to wait, I do assure you. To

wotever place I goes, I sticks to this one mortar, "I'm easy pleased; it is but little as I wants; but I must have that little of the best, and to the minute when the clock strikes, else we do not part as I could wish, but bearin' malice in our arts." "

Her own preparations were of the best, for they comprehended a delicate new loaf, a plate of fresh butter, a basin of fine white sugar, and other arrangements on the same scale. Even the snuff with which she now refreshed herself, was so choice in quality that she took a second pinch. . . .

At this juncture the little bell rang, and the deep voice of Mrs. Prig struck into the conversation.

'Oh! You're a-talkin' about it, are you!' observed that lady. 'Well, I hope you've got it over, for I ain't interested in it myself.'

'My precious Betsey,' said Mrs. Gamp, 'how late you are!'

The worthy Mrs. Prig replied, with some asperity, 'that if perverse people went off dead, when they was least expected, it warn't no fault of her'n.' And further, 'that it was quite aggrawation enough to be made late when one was dropping for one's tea, without hearing on it again.'

Mrs. Gamp, deriving from this exhibition of repartee some clue to the state of Mrs. Prig's feelings, instantly conducted her up-stairs: deeming that the sight of pickled salmon might work a softening change.

But Betsey Prig expected pickled salmon. It was obvious that she did; for her first words, after glancing at the table, were:

'I know'd she wouldn't have a cowcumber!'

Mrs. Gamp changed colour, and sat down upon the bedstead.

‘Lord bless you, Betsey Prig, your words is true. I quite forgot it!’

Mrs. Prig, looking steadfastly at her friend, put her hand in her pocket, and with an air of surly triumph drew forth either the oldest of lettuces or youngest of cabbages, but at any rate, a green vegetable of an expansive nature, and of such magnificent proportions that she was obliged to shut it up like an umbrella before she could pull it out. She also produced a handful of mustard and cress, a trifle of the herb called dandelion, three bunches of radishes, an onion rather larger than an average turnip, three substantial slices of beetroot, and a short prong or antler of celery; the whole of this garden-stuff having been publicly exhibited, but a short time before, as a twopenny salad, and purchased by Mrs. Prig on condition that the vendor could get it all into her pocket. Which had been happily accomplished, in High Holborn, to the breathless interest of a hackney-coach stand. And she laid so little stress on this surprising forethought, that she did not even smile, but returning her pocket into its accustomed sphere, merely recommended that these productions of nature should be sliced up, for immediate consumption, in plenty of vinegar.

‘And don’t go a-droppin’ none of your snuff in it,’ said Mrs. Prig. ‘In gruel, barley-water, apple-tea, mutton-broth, and that, it don’t signify. It stimulates a patient. But I don’t relish it myself.’

‘Why, Betsey Prig!’ cried Mrs. Gamp, ‘how can you talk so!’

‘Why, ain’t your patients, wotever their diseases

is, always a-sneezin' their wery heads off, along of your snuff?' said Mrs. Prig.

'And wot if they are!' said Mrs. Gamp.

'Nothing if they are,' said Mrs. Prig. 'But don't deny it, Sairah.'

'Who deniges of it?' Mrs. Gamp inquired.

Mrs. Prig returned no answer.

'Who deniges of it, Betsey?' Mrs. Gamp inquired again. Then Mrs. Gamp, by reversing the question, imparted a deeper and more awful character of solemnity to the same. 'Betsey, who deniges of it?'

It was the nearest possible approach to a very decided difference of opinion between these ladies; but Mrs. Prig's impatience for the meal being greater at the moment than her impatience of contradiction, she replied, for the present, 'Nobody, if you don't, Sairah,' and prepared herself for tea. For a quarrel can be taken up at any time, but a limited quantity of salmon cannot.

Her toilet was simple. She had merely to 'chuck' her bonnet and shawl upon the bed; give her hair two pulls, one upon the right side and one upon the left, as if she were ringing a couple of bells; and all was done. The tea was already made, Mrs. Gamp was not long over the salad, and they were soon at the height of their repast.

The temper of both parties was improved, for the time being, by the enjoyments of the table. When the meal came to a termination (which it was pretty long in doing), and Mrs. Gamp having cleared away, produced the teapot from the top-shelf, simultaneously with a couple of wine-glasses, they were quite amiable.

‘Betsey,’ said Mrs. Gamp, filling her own glass, and passing the teapot, ‘I will now propoge a toast. My frequent pardner, Betsey Prig!’

‘Which, altering the name to Sairah Gamp; I drink,’ said Mrs. Prig, ‘with love and tenderness.’

From this moment symptoms of inflammation began to lurk in the nose of each lady; and perhaps, notwithstanding all appearances to the contrary, in the temper also.

‘Now, Sairah,’ said Mrs. Prig, ‘joining business with pleasure, wot is this case in which you wants me?’

Mrs. Gamp betraying in her face some intention of returning an evasive answer, Betsey added:

‘Is it Mrs. Harris?’

‘No, Betsey Prig, it ain’t,’ was Mrs. Gamp’s reply.

‘Well!’ said Mrs. Prig, with a short laugh. ‘I’m glad of that, at any rate.’

‘Why should you be glad of that, Betsey?’ Mrs. Gamp retorted, warmly. ‘She is unbeknown to you except by hearsay, why should you be glad? If you have anythink to say contrairy to the character of Mrs. Harris, which well I knows behind her back, afore her face, or anywheres, is not to be impeaged, out with it, Betsey. I have know’d that sweetest and best of women,’ said Mrs. Gamp, shaking her head, and shedding tears, ‘ever since afore her First, which Mr. Harris who was dreadful timid went and stopped his ears in a empty dog-kennel, and never took his hands away or come out once till he was showed the baby, wen bein’ took with fits, the doctor collared him and laid him on his back upon the airy stones, and she was told to ease her mind, his owls was

organs. And I have know'd her, Betsey Prig, when he has hurt her feelin' art by sayin' of his Ninth that it was one too many, if not two, while that dear innocent was cooin' in his face, which thrive it did though bandy, but I have never know'd as you had occagion to be glad, Betsey, on accounts of Mrs. Harris not requiring you. Require she never will, depend upon it, for her constant words in sickness is, and will be, "Send for Sairey!"

During this touching address, Mrs. Prig adroitly feigning to be the victim of that absence of mind which has its origin in excessive attention to one topic, helped herself from the teapot without appearing to observe it. Mrs. Gamp observed it, however, and came to a premature close in consequence.

'Well, it ain't her, it seems,' said Mrs. Prig, coldly: 'who is it then?'

'You have heerd me mention, Betsey,' Mrs. Gamp replied, after glancing in an expressive and marked manner at the teapot, 'a person as I took care on at the time as you and me was pardners off and on, in that there fever at the Bull?'

'Old Snuffey,' Mrs. Prig observed.

Sarah Gamp looked at her with an eye of fire, for she saw in this mistake of Mrs. Prig, another wilful and malignant stab at that same weakness or custom of hers, an ungenerous allusion to which, on the part of Betsey, had first disturbed their harmony that evening. And she saw it still more clearly, when, politely but firmly correcting that lady by the distinct enunciation of the word 'Chuffey', Mrs. Prig received the correction with a diabolical laugh.

The best among us have their failings, and it must be conceded of Mrs. Prig, that if there were a blemish in the goodness of her disposition, it was a habit she had of not bestowing all its sharp and acid properties upon her patients (as a thoroughly amiable woman would have done), but of keeping a considerable remainder for the service of her friends. Highly pickled salmon, and lettuces chopped up in vinegar, may, as viands possessing some acidity of their own, have encouraged and increased this failing in Mrs. Prig; and every application to the teapot certainly did; for it was often remarked of her by her friends, that she was most contradictory when most elevated. It is certain that her countenance became about this time derisive and defiant, and that she sat with her arms folded, and one eye shut up, in a somewhat offensive, because obtrusively intelligent, manner.

Mrs. Gamp observing this, felt it the more necessary that Mrs. Prig should know her place, and be made sensible of her exact station in society, as well as of her obligations to herself. She therefore assumed an air of greater patronage and importance, as she went on to answer Mrs. Prig a little more in detail.

‘Mr. Chuffey, Betsey,’ said Mrs. Gamp, ‘is weak in his mind. Excuse me if I makes remark, that he may neither be so weak as people thinks, nor people may not think he is so weak as they pretends, and what I knows, I knows; and what you don’t, you don’t; so do not ask me, Betsey. But Mr. Chuffey’s friends has made propojals for his bein’ took care on, and has said to me, “Mrs. Gamp, *will* you undertake it? We couldn’t

think," they says, "of trusting him to nobody but you, for, Sairey, you are gold as has passed the furnace. Will you undertake it, at your own price, day and night, and by your own self?" "No," I says, "I will not. Do not reckon on it. There is," I says, "but one creetur in the world as I would undertake on sech terms, and her name is Harris. But," I says, "I am acquainted with a friend, whose name is Betsey Prig, that I can recommend, and will assist me. Betsey," I says, "is always to be trusted, under me, and will be guided as I could desire."'

Here Mrs. Prig, without any abatement of her offensive manner, again counterfeited abstraction of mind, and stretched out her hand to the teapot. It was more than Mrs. Gamp could bear. She stopped the hand of Mrs. Prig with her own, and said, with great feeling:

'No, Betsey! Drink fair, wotever you do!'

Mrs. Prig, thus baffled, threw herself back in her chair, and closing the same eye more emphatically, and folding her arms tighter, suffered her head to roll slowly from side to side, while she surveyed her friend with a contemptuous smile.

Mrs. Gamp resumed:

'Mrs. Harris, Betsey—'

'Bother Mrs. Harris!' said Betsey Prig.

Mrs. Gamp looked at her with amazement, incredulity, and indignation; when Mrs. Prig, shutting her eye still closer, and folding her arms still tighter, uttered these memorable and tremendous words:

'I don't believe there's no sich a person!'

After the utterance of which expressions, she leaned forward, and snapped her fingers once,

twice, thrice; each time nearer to the face of Mrs. Gamp, and then rose to put on her bonnet, as one who felt that there was now a gulf between them, which nothing could ever bridge across.

The shock of this blow was so violent and sudden, that Mrs. Gamp sat staring at nothing with uplifted eyes, and her mouth open as if she were gasping for breath, until Betsey Prig had put on her bonnet and her shawl, and was gathering the latter about her throat. Then Mrs. Gamp rose—morally and physically rose—and denounced her.

‘What!’ said Mrs. Gamp, ‘you bage creetur, have I know’d Mrs. Harris five and thirty year, to be told at last that there ain’t no sech a person livin’! Have I stood her friend in all her troubles, great and small, for it to come at last to sech a end as this, which her own sweet picter hanging up afore you all the time, to shame your Bragian words! But well you mayn’t believe there’s no sech a creetur, for she wouldn’t demean herself to look at you, and often has she said, when I have made mention of your name, which, to my sinful sorrow, I have done, ‘What, Sairey Gamp! debage yourself to *her*!’ Go along with you!’

‘I’m a-goin,’ ma’am, ain’t I?’ said Mrs. Prig, stopping as she said it.

‘You had better, ma’am,’ said Mrs. Gamp.

‘Do you know who you’re talking to, ma’am?’ inquired her visitor.

‘Aperiently,’ said Mrs. Gamp, surveying her with scorn from head to foot, ‘to Betsey Prig. Aperiently so. *I* know her. No one better. Go along with you!’

‘And *you* was a-goin’ to take me under you!’

cried Mrs. Prig, surveying Mrs. Gamp from head to foot in her turn. 'You was, was you? Oh, how kind! Why, deuce take your imperence,' said Mrs. Prig, with a rapid change from banter to ferocity, 'what do you mean?'

'Go along with you!' said Mrs. Gamp. 'I blush for you.'

'You had better blush a little for yourself, while you *are* about it!' said Mrs. Prig. 'You and your Chuffeys! What, the poor old creetur isn't mad enough, isn't he? Aha!'

'He'd very soon be mad enough, if you had anything to do with him,' said Mrs. Gamp.

'And that's what I was wanted for, is it?' cried Mrs. Prig, triumphantly. 'Yes. But you'll find yourself deceived. I won't go near him. We shall see how you get on without me. I won't have nothink to do with him.'

'You never spoke a truer word than that!' said Mrs. Gamp. 'Go along with you!'

She was prevented from witnessing the actual retirement of Mrs. Prig from the room, notwithstanding the great desire she had expressed to behold it, by that lady, in her angry withdrawal, coming into contact with the bedstead, and bringing down the previously mentioned pippins; three or four of which came rattling on the head of Mrs. Gamp so smartly, that when she recovered from this wooden shower-bath, Mrs. Prig was gone.

—*Martin Chuzzlewit.*

## MR. AND MRS. MICAWBER

## i. IN WINDSOR TERRACE

ARRIVED at his house in Windsor Terrace (which I noticed was shabby like himself, but also, like himself, made all the show it could), he presented me to Mrs. Micawber, a thin and faded lady, not at all young, who was sitting in the parlour (the first floor was altogether unfurnished, and the blinds were kept down to delude the neighbours), with a baby at her breast. This baby was one of twins; and I may remark here that I hardly ever, in all my experience of the family, saw both the twins detached from Mrs. Micawber at the same time. One of them was always taking refreshment.

There were two other children; Master Micawber, aged about four, and Miss Micawber, aged about three. These, and a dark-complexioned young woman, with a habit of snorting, who was servant to the family, and informed me, before half-an-hour had expired, that she was 'a Orfling', and came from St. Luke's workhouse, in the neighbourhood, completed the establishment. My room was at the top of the house, at the back: a close chamber; stencilled all over with an ornament which my young imagination represented as a blue muffin; and very scantily furnished.

'I never thought,' said Mrs. Micawber, when she came up, twin and all, to show me the apartment, and sat down to take breath, 'before I was married, when I lived with papa and mama, that I should ever find it necessary to take a lodger. But Mr. Micawber being in difficulties, all considerations of private feeling must give way.'

I said : ' Yes, ma'am.'

' Mr. Micawber's difficulties are almost overwhelming just at present,' said Mrs. Micawber ; ' and whether it is possible to bring him through them, I don't know. When I lived at home with papa and mama, I really should have hardly understood what the word meant, in the sense in which I now employ it, but experientia does it—as papa used to say.'

I cannot satisfy myself whether she told me that Mr. Micawber had been an officer in the Marines, or whether I have imagined it. I only know that I believe to this hour that he *was* in the Marines once upon a time, without knowing why. He was a sort of town traveller for a number of miscellaneous houses, now ; but made little or nothing of it, I am afraid.

' If Mr. Micawber's creditors *will not* give him time,' said Mrs. Micawber, ' they must take the consequences ; and the sooner they bring it to an issue the better. Blood cannot be obtained from a stone, neither can anything on account be obtained at present (not to mention law expenses) from Mr. Micawber.'

I never can quite understand whether my precocious self-dependence confused Mrs. Micawber in reference to my age, or whether she was so full of the subject that she would have talked about it to the very twins if there had been nobody else to communicate with, but this was the strain in which she began, and she went on accordingly all the time I knew her.

Poor Mrs. Micawber ! She said she had tried to exert herself ; and so, I have no doubt, she had. The centre of the street-door was perfectly covered

with a great brass-plate, on which was engraved 'Mrs. Micawber's Boarding Establishment for Young Ladies : ' but I never found that any young lady had ever been to school there ; or that any young lady ever came, or proposed to come ; or that the least preparation was ever made to receive any young lady. The only visitors I ever saw or heard of, were creditors. *They* used to come at all hours, and some of them were quite ferocious. One dirty-faced man, I think he was a boot-maker, used to edge himself into the passage as early as seven o'clock in the morning, and call up the stairs to Mr. Micawber—' Come ! You ain't out yet, you know. Pay us, will you ? Don't hide, you know ; that's mean. I wouldn't be mean if I was you. Pay us, will you ? You just pay us, d'ye hear ? Come ! ' Receiving no answer to these taunts, he would mount in his wrath to the words ' swindlers ' and ' robbers ; ' and these being ineffectual too, would sometimes go to the extremity of crossing the street, and roaring up at the windows of the second floor, where he knew Mr. Micawber was. At these times, Mr. Micawber would be transported with grief and mortification, even to the length (as I was once made aware by a scream from his wife) of making motions at himself with a razor ; but within half-an-hour afterwards, he would polish up his shoes with extraordinary pains, and go out, humming a tune with a greater air of gentility than ever. Mrs. Micawber was quite as elastic. I have known her to be thrown into fainting fits by the king's taxes at three o'clock, and to eat lamb-chops breaded, and drink warm ale (paid for with two tea-spoons that had gone to the pawnbroker's) at four. On one occasion, when an execution had just

been put in, coming home through some chance as early as six o'clock, I saw her lying (of course with a twin) under the grate in a swoon, with her hair all torn about her face ; but I never knew her more cheerful than she was, that very same night, over a veal-cutlet before the kitchen fire, telling me stories about her papa and mama, and the company they used to keep.—*David Copperfield*.

## ii. IN AND OUT OF THE KING'S BENCH PRISON

Mr. Micawber's difficulties were an addition to the distressed state of my mind. In my forlorn state I became quite attached to the family, and used to walk about, busy with Mrs. Micawber's calculations of ways and means, and heavy with the weight of Mr. Micawber's debts. On a Saturday night, which was my grand treat—partly because it was a great thing to walk home with six or seven shillings in my pocket, looking into the shops and thinking what such a sum would buy, and partly because I went home early—Mrs. Micawber would make the most heart-rending confidences to me ; also on a Sunday morning, when I mixed the portion of tea or coffee I had bought over-night, in a little shaving-pot, and sat late at my breakfast. It was nothing at all unusual for Mr. Micawber to sob violently at the beginning of one of these Saturday night conversations, and sing about Jack's delight being his lovely Nan, towards the end of it. I have known him come home to supper with a flood of tears, and a declaration that nothing was now left but a jail ; and go to bed making a calculation of the expense of putting bow-windows to the house, 'in case anything turned up,' which was his favourite

expression. And Mrs. Micawber was just the same.

A curious equality of friendship, originating, I suppose, in our respective circumstances, sprung up between me and these people, notwithstanding the ludicrous disparity in our years. But I never allowed myself to be prevailed upon to accept any invitation to eat and drink with them out of their stock (knowing that they got on badly with the butcher and baker, and had often not too much for themselves), until Mrs. Micawber took me into her entire confidence. This she did one evening as follows :

‘ Master Copperfield,’ said Mrs. Micawber, ‘ I make no stranger of you, and therefore do not hesitate to say that Mr. Micawber’s difficulties are coming to a crisis.’

It made me very miserable to hear it, and I looked at Mrs. Micawber’s red eyes with the utmost sympathy.

‘ With the exception of the heel of a Dutch cheese—which is not adapted to the wants of a young family’—said Mrs. Micawber, ‘ there is really not a scrap of anything in the larder. I was accustomed to speak of the larder when I lived with papa and mama, and I use the word almost unconsciously. What I mean to express is, that there is nothing to eat in the house.’

‘ Dear me !’ I said, in great concern.

I had two or three shillings of my week’s money in my pocket—from which I presume that it must have been on a Wednesday night when we held this conversation—and I hastily produced them, and with heartfelt emotion begged Mrs. Micawber to accept of them as a loan. But that lady, kissing

me, and making me put them back in my pocket, replied that she couldn't think of it.

'No, my dear Master Copperfield,' said she, 'far be it from my thoughts! But you have a discretion beyond your years, and can render me another kind of service, if you will; and a service I will thankfully accept of.'

I begged Mrs. Micawber to name it.

'I have parted with the plate myself,' said Mrs. Micawber. 'Six tea, two salt, and a pair of sugars, I have at different times borrowed money on, in secret, with my own hands. But the twins are a great tie; and to me, with my recollections of papa and mama, these transactions are very painful. There are still a few trifles that we could part with. Mr. Micawber's feelings would never allow *him* to dispose of them; and Clickett'—this was the girl from the workhouse—'being of a vulgar mind, would take painful liberties if so much confidence was reposed in her. Master Copperfield, if I might ask you——'

I understood Mrs. Micawber now, and begged her to make use of me to any extent. I began to dispose of the more portable articles of property that very evening; and went out on a similar expedition almost every morning, before I went to Murdstone and Grinby's.

Mr. Micawber had a few books on a little chiffonier, which he called the library; and those went first. I carried them, one after another, to a bookstall in the City Road—one part of which, near our house, was almost all bookstalls and bird-shops then—and sold them for whatever they would bring. The keeper of this bookstall, who lived in a little house behind it, used to get tipsy

every night, and to be violently scolded by his wife every morning. More than once, when I went there early, I had audience of him in a turn-up bed-stead, with a cut in his forehead or a black eye, bearing witness to his excesses over-night (I am afraid he was quarrelsome in his drink), and he with a shaking hand, endeavouring to find the needful shillings in one or other of the pockets of his clothes, which lay upon the floor, while his wife, with a baby in her arms and her shoes down at heel, never left off rating him. Sometimes he had lost his money, and then he would ask me to call again; but his wife had always got some—had taken his, I dare say, while he was drunk—and secretly completed the bargain on the stairs, as we went down together.

At the pawnbroker's shop, too, I began to be very well known. The principal gentleman who officiated behind the counter, took a good deal of notice of me; and often got me, I recollect, to decline a Latin noun or adjective, or to conjugate a Latin verb, in his ear, while he transacted my business. After all these occasions Mrs. Micawber made a little treat, which was generally a supper; and there was a peculiar relish in these meals which I well remember.

At last Mr. Micawber's difficulties came to a crisis, and he was arrested early one morning, and carried over to the King's Bench Prison in the Borough. He told me, as he went out of the house, that the God of day had now gone down upon him—and I really thought his heart was broken and mine too. But I heard, afterwards, that he was seen to play a lively game at skittles, before noon.

On the first Sunday after he was taken there,

I was to go and see him, and have dinner with him. I was to ask my way to such a place, and just short of that place I should see such another place, and just short of that I should see a yard, which I was to cross, and keep straight on until I saw a turnkey. All this I did ; and when at last I did see a turnkey (poor little fellow that I was !), and thought how, when Roderick Random was in a debtors' prison, there was a man there with nothing on him but an old rug, the turnkey swam before my dimmed eyes and my beating heart.

Mr. Micawber was waiting for me within the gate, and we went up to his room (top story but one), and cried very much. He solemnly conjured me, I remember, to take warning by his fate ; and to observe that if a man had twenty pounds a year for his income, and spent nineteen pounds nineteen shillings and sixpence, he would be happy, but that if he spent twenty pounds one he would be miserable. After which he borrowed a shilling of me for porter, gave me a written order on Mrs. Micawber for the amount, and put away his pocket-handkerchief, and cheered up.

We sat before a little fire, with two bricks put within the rusted grate, one on each side, to prevent its burning too many coals ; until another debtor, who shared the room with Mr. Micawber, came in from the bakehouse with the loin of mutton which was our joint-stock repast. Then I was sent up to ' Captain Hopkins ' in the room overhead, with Mr. Micawber's compliments, and I was his young friend, and would Captain Hopkins lend me a knife and fork.

Captain Hopkins lent me the knife and fork, with his compliments to Mr. Micawber. There was

a very dirty lady in his little room, and two wan girls, his daughters, with shock heads of hair. I thought it was better to borrow Captain Hopkins's knife and fork, than Captain Hopkins's comb. The Captain himself was in the last extremity of shabbiness, with large whiskers, and an old, old brown great-coat with no other coat below it. I saw his bed rolled up in a corner; and what plates and dishes and pots he had, on a shelf; and I divined (God knows how) that though the two girls with the shock heads of hair were Captain Hopkins's children, the dirty lady was not married to Captain Hopkins. My timid station on his threshold was not occupied more than a couple of minutes at most; but I came down again with all this in my knowledge, as surely as the knife and fork were in my hand.

There was something gipsy-like and agreeable in the dinner, after all. I took back Captain Hopkins's knife and fork early in the afternoon, and went home to comfort Mrs. Micawber with an account of my visit. She fainted when she saw me return, and made a little jug of egg-hot afterwards to console us while we talked it over.

I don't know how the household furniture came to be sold for the family benefit, or who sold it, except that *I* did not. Sold it was, however, and carried away in a van: except the bed, a few chairs, and the kitchen-table. With these possessions we encamped, as it were, in the two parlours of the emptied house in Windsor Terrace; Mrs. Micawber, the children, the Orfling, and myself; and lived in those rooms night and day. I have no idea for how long, though it seems to me for a long time. At last Mrs. Micawber resolved to move into the prison, where Mr. Micawber had now

secured a room to himself. So I took the key of the house to the landlord, who was very glad to get it; and the beds were sent over to the King's Bench, except mine, for which a little room was hired outside the walls in the neighbourhood of that institution, very much to my satisfaction, since the Micawbers and I had become too used to one another, in our troubles, to part. The Orfling was likewise accommodated with an inexpensive lodging in the same neighbourhood. Mine was a quiet back-garret with a sloping roof, commanding a pleasant prospect of a timber-yard, and when I took possession of it, with the reflection that Mr. Micawber's troubles had come to a crisis at last, I thought it quite a paradise.

All this time I was working at Murdstone and Grinby's in the same common way, and with the same common companions, and with the same sense of unmerited degradation as at first. But I never, happily for me no doubt, made a single acquaintance, or spoke to any of the many boys whom I saw daily in going to the warehouse, in coming from it, and in prowling about the streets at meal-times. I led the same secretly unhappy life; but I led it in the same lonely, self-reliant manner. The only changes I am conscious of are, firstly, that I had grown more shabby, and secondly, that I was now relieved of much of the weight of Mr. and Mrs. Micawber's cares; for some relatives or friends had engaged to help them at their present pass, and they lived more comfortably in the prison than they had lived for a long while out of it. I used to breakfast with them now, in virtue of some arrangement, of which I have forgotten the details. I forget, too, at what hour the gates were opened

in the morning, admitting of my going in ; but I know that I was often up at six o'clock, and that my favourite lounging-place in the interval was old London Bridge, where I was wont to sit in one of the stone recesses, watching the people going by, or to look over the balustrades at the sun shining in the water, and lighting up the golden flame on the top of the Monument. The Orfling met me here sometimes, to be told some astonishing fictions respecting the wharves and the Tower ; of which I can say no more than that I hope I believed them myself. In the evening I used to go back to the prison, and walk up and down the parade with Mr. Micawber ; or play casino with Mrs. Micawber, and hear reminiscences of her papa and mama. Whether Mr. Murdstone knew where I was, I am unable to say. I never told them at Murdstone and Grinby's.

Mr. Micawber's affairs, although past their crisis, were very much involved by reason of a certain 'Deed,' of which I used to hear a great deal, and which I suppose, now, to have been some former composition with his creditors, though I was so far from being clear about it then, that I am conscious of having confounded it with those demoniacal parchments which are held to have, once upon a time, obtained to a great extent in Germany. At last this document appeared to be got out of the way, somehow ; at all events it ceased to be the rock ahead it had been ; and Mrs. Micawber informed me that 'her family' had decided that Mr. Micawber should apply for his release under the Insolvent Debtors' Act, which would set him free, she expected, in about six weeks.

'And then,' said Mr. Micawber, who was present, 'I have no doubt I shall, please heaven, begin to

be beforehand with the world, and to live in a perfectly new manner, if—in short, if anything turns up.’

By way of going in for anything that might be on the cards, I call to mind that Mr. Micawber, about this time, composed a petition to the House of Commons, praying for an alteration in the law of imprisonment for debt. I set down this remembrance here, because it is an instance to myself of the manner in which I fitted my old books to my altered life, and made stories for myself, out of the streets, and out of men and women; and how some main points in the character I shall unconsciously develop, I suppose, in writing my life, were gradually forming all this while.

There was a club in the prison, in which Mr. Micawber, as a gentleman, was a great authority. Mr. Micawber had stated his idea of this petition to the club, and the club had strongly approved of the same. Wherefore Mr. Micawber (who was a thoroughly good-natured man, and as active a creature about everything but his own affairs as ever existed, and never so happy as when he was busy about something that could never be of any profit to him) set to work at the petition, invented it, engrossed it on an immense sheet of paper, spread it out on a table, and appointed a time for all the club, and all within the walls if they chose, to come up to his room and sign it.

When I heard of this approaching ceremony, I was so anxious to see them all come in, one after another, though I knew the greater part of them already, and they me, that I got an hour’s leave of absence from Murdstone and Grinby’s, and established myself in a corner for that purpose.

As many of the principal members of the club as could be got into the small room without filling it, supported Mr. Micawber in front of the petition, while my old friend Captain Hopkins (who had washed himself, to do honour to so solemn an occasion) stationed himself close to it, to read it to all who were unacquainted with its contents. The door was then thrown open, and the general population began to come in, in a long file : several waiting outside, while one entered, affixed his signature, and went out. To everybody in succession, Captain Hopkins said : ' Have you read it ? '—' No.' ' Would you like to hear it read ? ' If he weakly showed the least disposition to hear it, Captain Hopkins, in a loud sonorous voice, gave him every word of it. The Captain would have read it twenty thousand times, if twenty thousand people would have heard him, one by one. I remember a certain luscious roll he gave to such phrases as ' The people's representatives in Parliament assembled,' ' Your petitioners therefore humbly approach your honourable house,' ' His gracious Majesty's unfortunate subjects,' as if the words were something real in his mouth, and delicious to taste ; Mr. Micawber, meanwhile, listening with a little of an author's vanity, and contemplating (not severely) the spikes on the opposite wall.

As I walked to and fro daily between Southwark and Blackfriars, and lounged about at meal-times in obscure streets, the stones of which may, for anything I know, be worn at this moment by my childish feet, I wonder how many of these people were wanting in the crowd that used to come filing before me in review again, to the echo of Captain Hopkins's voice ! When my thoughts go back now,

to that slow agony of my youth, I wonder how much of the histories I invented for such people hangs like a mist of fancy over well-remembered facts ! When I tread the old ground, I do not wonder that I seem to see and pity, going on before me, an innocent romantic boy, making his imaginative world out of such strange experiences and sordid things.

In due time, Mr. Micawber's petition was ripe for hearing ; and that gentleman was ordered to be discharged under the Act, to my great joy. His creditors were not implacable ; and Mrs. Micawber informed me that even the revengeful bootmaker had declared in open court that he bore him no malice, but that when money was owing to him he liked to be paid. He said he thought it was human nature.

Mr. Micawber returned to the King's Bench when his case was over, as some fees were to be settled, and some formalities observed, before he could be actually released. The club received him with transport, and held an harmonic meeting that evening in his honour ; while Mrs. Micawber and I had a lamb's fry in private, surrounded by the sleeping family.

'On such an occasion I will give you, Master Copperfield,' said Mrs. Micawber, 'in a little more flip,' for we had been having some already, 'the memory of my papa and mama.'

'Are they dead, ma'am ?' I inquired, after drinking the toast in a wine-glass.

'My mama departed this life,' said Mrs. Micawber, 'before Mr. Micawber's difficulties commenced, or at least before they became pressing. My papa lived to bail Mr. Micawber several

times, and then expired, regretted by a numerous circle.'

Mrs. Micawber shook her head, and dropped a pious tear upon the twin who happened to be in hand.

As I could hardly hope for a more favourable opportunity of putting a question in which I had a near interest, I said to Mrs. Micawber :

'May I ask, ma'am, what you and Mr. Micawber intend to do, now that Mr. Micawber is out of his difficulties, and at liberty? Have you settled yet?'

'My family,' said Mrs. Micawber, who always said those two words with an air, though I never could discover who came under the denomination, 'my family are of opinion that Mr. Micawber should quit London, and exert his talents in the country. Mr. Micawber is a man of great talent, Master Copperfield.'

I said I was sure of that.

'Of great talent,' repeated Mrs. Micawber. 'My family are of opinion, that, with a little interest, something might be done for a man of his ability in the Custom House. The influence of my family being local, it is their wish that Mr. Micawber should go down to Plymouth. They think it indispensable that he should be upon the spot.'

'That he may be ready?' I suggested.

'Exactly,' returned Mrs. Micawber. 'That he may be ready, in case of anything turning up.'

'And do you go too, ma'am?'

The events of the day, in combination with the twins, if not with the flip, had made Mrs. Micawber hysterical, and she shed tears as she replied :

'I never will desert Mr. Micawber. Mr.

Micawber may have concealed his difficulties from me in the first instance, but his sanguine temper may have led him to expect that he would overcome them. The pearl necklace and bracelets which I inherited from mama, have been disposed of for less than half their value; and the set of coral, which was the wedding gift of my papa, has been actually thrown away for nothing. But I never will desert Mr. Micawber. No!' cried Mrs. Micawber, more affected than before, 'I never will do it! It's of no use asking me!'

I felt quite uncomfortable—as if Mrs. Micawber supposed I had asked her to do anything of the sort!—and sat looking at her in alarm.

'Mr. Micawber has his faults. I do not deny that he is improvident. I do not deny that he has kept me in the dark as to his resources and his liabilities, both,' she went on, looking at the wall; 'but I never will desert Mr. Micawber!'

Mrs. Micawber having now raised her voice into a perfect scream, I was so frightened that I ran off to the club-room, and disturbed Mr. Micawber in the act of presiding at a long table, and leading the chorus of

Gee up, Dobbin,  
Gee ho, Dobbin,  
Gee up, Dobbin,  
Gee up, and gee ho—o—o!

—with the tidings that Mrs. Micawber was in an alarming state, upon which he immediately burst into tears, and came away with me with his waistcoat full of the heads and tails of shrimps, of which he had been partaking.

'Emma, my angel!' cried Mr. Micawber, running into the room; 'what is the matter?'

‘I never will desert you, Micawber!’ she exclaimed.

‘My life!’ said Mr. Micawber, taking her in his arms. ‘I am perfectly aware of it.’

‘He is the parent of my children! He is the father of my twins! He is the husband of my affections,’ cried Mrs. Micawber, struggling; ‘and I ne—ver—will—desert Mr. Micawber!’

Mr. Micawber was so deeply affected by this proof of her devotion (as to me, I was dissolved in tears), that he hung over her in a passionate manner, imploring her to look up, and to be calm. But the more he asked Mrs. Micawber to look up, the more she fixed her eyes on nothing; and the more he asked her to compose herself, the more she wouldn’t. Consequently Mr. Micawber was soon so overcome, that he mingled his tears with hers and mine; until he begged me to do him the favour of taking a chair on the staircase, while he got her into bed. I would have taken my leave for the night, but he would not hear of my doing that until the strangers’ bell should ring. So I sat at the staircase window, until he came out with another chair and joined me.

‘How is Mrs. Micawber now, sir?’ I said.

‘Very low,’ said Mr. Micawber, shaking his head; ‘reaction. Ah, this has been a dreadful day! We stand alone now—everything is gone from us!’

Mr. Micawber pressed my hand, and groaned, and afterwards shed tears. I was greatly touched, and disappointed too, for I had expected that we should be quite gay on this happy and long-looked-for occasion. But Mr. and Mrs. Micawber were so used to their old difficulties, I think, that they felt quite shipwrecked when they came to consider that

they were released from them. All their elasticity was departed, and I never saw them half so wretched as on this night; insomuch that when the bell rang, and Mr. Micawber walked with me to the lodge, and parted from me there with a blessing, I felt quite afraid to leave him by himself, he was so profoundly miserable.

But through all the confusion and lowness of spirits in which we had been, so unexpectedly to me, involved, I plainly discerned that Mr. and Mrs. Micawber and their family were going away from London, and that a parting between us was near at hand. It was in my walk home that night, and in the sleepless hours which followed when I lay in bed, that the thought first occurred to me—though I don't know how it came into my head—which afterwards shaped itself into a settled resolution.

I had grown to be so accustomed to the Micawbers, and had been so intimate with them in their distresses, and was so utterly friendless without them, that the prospect of being thrown upon some new shift for a lodging, and going once more among unknown people, was like being that moment turned adrift into my present life, with such a knowledge of it ready made as experience had given me. All the sensitive feelings it wounded so cruelly, all the shame and misery it kept alive within my breast, became more poignant as I thought of this; and I determined that the life was unendurable.

That there was no hope of escape from it, unless the escape was my own act, I knew quite well. I rarely heard from Miss Murdstone, and never from Mr. Murdstone; but two or three parcels of

made or mended clothes had come up for me, consigned to Mr. Quinion, and in each there was a scrap of paper to the effect that J. M. trusted D. C. was applying himself to business, and devoting himself wholly to his duties—not the least hint of my ever being anything else than the common drudge into which I was fast settling down.

The very next day showed me, while my mind was in the first agitation of what it had conceived, that Mrs. Micawber had not spoken of their going away without warrant. They took a lodging in the house where I lived, for a week; at the expiration of which time they were to start for Plymouth. Mr. Micawber himself came down to the counting-house, in the afternoon, to tell Mr. Quinion that he must relinquish me on the day of his departure, and to give me a high character, which I am sure I deserved. And Mr. Quinion, calling in Tipp the carman, who was a married man, and had a room to let, quartered me prospectively on him—by our mutual consent, as he had every reason to think; for I said nothing, though my resolution was now taken.

I passed my evenings with Mr. and Mrs. Micawber, during the remaining term of our residence under the same roof; and I think we became fonder of one another as the time went on. On the last Sunday, they invited me to dinner; and we had a loin of pork and apple sauce, and a pudding. I had bought a spotted wooden horse over-night as a parting gift to little Wilkins Micawber—that was the boy—and a doll for little Emma. I had also bestowed a shilling on the Orfling, who was about to be disbanded.

We had a very pleasant day, though we were all in a tender state about our approaching separation.

‘I shall never, Master Copperfield,’ said Mrs. Micawber, ‘revert to the period when Mr. Micawber was in difficulties, without thinking of you. Your conduct has always been of the most delicate and obliging description. You have never been a lodger. You have been a friend.’

‘My dear,’ said Mr. Micawber; ‘Copperfield’, for so he had been accustomed to call me of late, ‘has a heart to feel for the distresses of his fellow creatures when they are behind a cloud, and a head to plan, and a hand to—in short, a general ability to dispose of such available property as could be made away with.’

I expressed my sense of this commendation, and said I was very sorry we were going to lose one another.

‘My dear young friend,’ said Mr. Micawber, ‘I am older than you; a man of some experience in life, and—and of some experience, in short, in difficulties, generally speaking. At present, and until something turns up (which I am, I may say, hourly expecting), I have nothing to bestow but advice. Still my advice is so far worth taking that—in short, that I have never taken it myself, and am the’—here Mr. Micawber, who had been beaming and smiling, all over his head and face, up to the present moment, checked himself and frowned—‘the miserable wretch you behold.’

‘My dear Micawber!’ urged his wife.

‘I say,’ returned Mr. Micawber, quite forgetting himself, and smiling again, ‘the miserable wretch you behold. My advice is, never do to-morrow

what you can do to-day. Procrastination is the thief of time. Collar him ! ’

‘ My poor papa’s maxim,’ Mrs. Micawber observed.

‘ My dear,’ said Mr. Micawber, ‘ your papa was very well in his way, and Heaven forbid that I should disparage him. Take him for all in all, we ne’er shall—in short, make the acquaintance, probably, of anybody else possessing, at his time of life, the same legs for gaiters, and able to read the same description of print, without spectacles. But he applied that maxim to our marriage, my dear ; and that was so far prematurely entered into, in consequence, that I never recovered the expense.’

Mr. Micawber looked aside at Mrs. Micawber, and added : ‘ Not that I am sorry for it. Quite the contrary, my love.’ After which he was grave for a minute or so.

‘ My other piece of advice, Copperfield,’ said Mr. Micawber, ‘ you know. Annual income twenty pounds, annual expenditure nineteen nineteen six, result happiness. Annual income twenty pounds, annual expenditure twenty pounds ought and six, result misery. The blossom is blighted, the leaf is withered, the God of day goes down upon the dreary scene, and—and in short you are for ever floored. As I am ! ’

To make his example the more impressive, Mr. Micawber drank a glass of punch with an air of great enjoyment and satisfaction, and whistled the College Hornpipe.—*David Copperfield.*

## STORM AND SHIPWRECK

I NOW approach an event in my life, so indelible, so awful, so bound by an infinite variety of ties to all that has preceded it in these pages, that, from the beginning of my narrative, I have seen it growing larger and larger as I advanced, like a great tower in a plain, and throwing its forecast shadow even on the incidents of my childish days.

For years after it occurred, I dreamed of it often. I have started up so vividly impressed by it, that its fury has yet seemed raging in my quiet room, in the still night. I dream of it sometimes, though at lengthened and uncertain intervals, to this hour. I have an association between it and a stormy wind, or the lightest mention of a sea-shore, as strong as any of which my mind is conscious. As plainly as I behold what happened, I will try to write it down. I do not recall it, but see it done ; for it happens again before me.

The time drawing on rapidly for the sailing of the emigrant-ship, my good old nurse (almost broken-hearted for me, when we first met) came up to London. I was constantly with her, and her brother, and the Micawbers (they being very much together) ; but Emily I never saw.

One evening when the time was close at hand, I was alone with Peggotty and her brother. Our conversation turned on Ham. She described to us how tenderly he had taken leave of her, and how manfully and quietly he had borne himself. Most of all, of late, when she believed he was most tried. It was a subject of which the affectionate creature never tired ; and our interest in hearing the many examples which she, who was so much with him,

had to relate, was equal to hers in relating them.

My aunt and I were at that time vacating the two cottages at Highgate; I intending to go abroad, and she to return to her house at Dover. We had a temporary lodging in Covent Garden. As I walked home to it, after this evening's conversation, reflecting on what had passed between Ham and myself when I was last at Yarmouth, I wavered in the original purpose I had formed, of leaving a letter for Emily when I should take leave of her uncle on board the ship, and thought it would be better to write to her now. She might desire, I thought, after receiving my communication, to send some parting word by me to her unhappy lover. I ought to give her the opportunity.

I therefore sat down in my room, before going to bed, and wrote to her. I told her that I had seen him, and that he had requested me to tell her what I have already written in its place in these sheets. I faithfully repeated it. I had no need to enlarge upon it, if I had had the right. Its deep fidelity and goodness were not to be adorned by me or any man. I left it out, to be sent round in the morning; with a line to Mr. Peggotty, requesting him to give it to her; and went to bed at daybreak.

I was weaker than I knew then; and, not falling asleep until the sun was up, lay late, and unrefreshed, next day. I was roused by the silent presence of my aunt at my bedside. I felt it in my sleep, as I suppose we all do feel such things.

'Trot, my dear,' she said, when I opened my eyes, 'I couldn't make up my mind to disturb you. Mr. Peggotty is here; shall he come up?'

I replied yes, and he soon appeared.

‘Mas’r Davy,’ he said, when we had shaken hands, ‘I giv Em’ly your letter, sir, and she writ this heer; and begged of me fur to ask you to read it, and if you see no hurt in’t, to be so kind as take charge on’t.’

‘Have you read it?’ said I.

He nodded sorrowfully. I opened it, and read as follows :

‘I have got your message. Oh, what can I write, to thank you for your good and blessed kindness to me !

‘I have put the words close to my heart. I shall keep them till I die. They are sharp thorns, but they are such comfort. I have prayed over them, oh, I have prayed so much. When I find what you are, and what uncle is, I think what God must be, and can cry to him.

‘Good-bye for ever. Now, my dear, my friend, good-bye for ever in this world. In another world, if I am forgiven, I may wake a child and come to you. All thanks and blessings. Farewell, evermore.’

This, blotted with tears, was the letter.

‘May I tell her as you doesn’t see no hurt in’t, and as you’ll be so kind as take charge on’t, Mas’r Davy?’ said Mr. Peggotty, when I had read it.

‘Unquestionably,’ said I—‘but I am thinking—’

‘Yes, Mas’r Davy?’

‘I am thinking,’ said I, ‘that I’ll go down again to Yarmouth. There’s time, and to spare, for me to go and come back before the ship sails. My mind is constantly running on him, in his solitude; to put this letter of her writing in his hand at this time, and to enable you to tell her, in the moment of parting, that he has got it, will be a kindness to both of them. I solemnly accepted his commission, dear good fellow, and cannot discharge it too completely. The journey is nothing to me. I am

restless, and shall be better in motion. I'll go down to-night.'

Though he anxiously endeavoured to dissuade me, I saw that he was of my mind; and this, if I had required to be confirmed in my intention, would have had the effect. He went round to the coach-office, at my request, and took the box-seat for me on the mail. In the evening I started, by that conveyance, down the road I had traversed under so many vicissitudes.

'Don't you think that,' I asked the coachman, in the first stage out of London, 'a very remarkable sky? I don't remember to have seen one like it.'

'Nor I—not equal to it,' he replied. 'That's wind, sir. There'll be mischief done at sea, I expect, before long.'

It was a murky confusion—here and there blotted with a colour like the colour of the smoke from damp fuel—of flying clouds tossed up into most remarkable heaps, suggesting greater heights in the clouds than there were depths below them to the bottom of the deepest hollows in the earth, through which the wild moon seemed to plunge headlong, as if, in a dread disturbance of the laws of nature, she had lost her way and were frightened. There had been a wind all day; and it was rising then, with an extraordinary great sound. In another hour it had much increased, and the sky was more overcast, and blew hard.

But as the night advanced, the clouds closing in and densely overspreading the whole sky, then very dark, it came on to blow, harder and harder. It still increased, until our horses could scarcely face the wind. Many times, in the dark part of

the night (it was then late in September, when the nights were not short), the leaders turned about, or came to a dead stop ; and we were often in serious apprehension that the coach would be blown over. Sweeping gusts of rain came up before this storm, like showers of steel ; and, at those times, when there was any shelter of trees or lee walls to be got, we were fain to stop, in a sheer impossibility of continuing the struggle.

When the day broke, it blew harder and harder. I had been in Yarmouth when the seamen said it blew great guns, but I had never known the like of this, or anything approaching to it. We came to Ipswich—very late, having had to fight every inch of ground since we were ten miles out of London ; and found a cluster of people in the market-place, who had risen from their beds in the night, fearful of falling chimneys. Some of these, congregating about the inn-yard while we changed horses, told us of great sheets of lead having been ripped off a high church-tower, and flung into a by-street, which they then blocked up. Others had to tell of country people, coming in from neighbouring villages, who had seen great trees lying torn out of the earth, and whole ricks scattered about the roads and fields. Still there was no abatement in the storm, but it blew harder.

As we struggled on, nearer and nearer to the sea, from which this mighty wind was blowing dead on shore, its force became more and more terrific. Long before we saw the sea, its spray was on our lips, and showered salt rain upon us. The water was out, over miles and miles of the flat country adjacent to Yarmouth ; and every sheet and puddle lashed its banks, and had its

stress of little breakers setting heavily towards us. When we came within sight of the sea, the waves on the horizon, caught at intervals above the rolling abyss, were like glimpses of another shore with towers and buildings. When at last we got into the town, the people came out to their doors, all aslant, and with streaming hair, making a wonder of the mail that had come through such a night.

I put up at the old inn, and went down to look at the sea; staggering along the street, which was strewn with sand and seaweed, and with flying blotches of sea-foam; afraid of falling slates and tiles; and holding by people I met, at angry corners. Coming near the beach, I saw, not only the boatmen, but half the people of the town, lurking behind buildings; some, now and then braving the fury of the storm to look away to sea, and blown sheer out of their course in trying to get zigzag back.

Joining these groups, I found bewailing women whose husbands were away in herring or oyster boats, which there was too much reason to think might have foundered before they could run in anywhere for safety. Grizzled old sailors were among the people, shaking their heads, as they looked from water to sky, and muttering to one another; shipowners, excited and uneasy; children, huddling together, and peering into older faces; even stout mariners, disturbed and anxious, levelling their glasses at the sea from behind places of shelter, as if they were surveying an enemy.

The tremendous sea itself, when I could find sufficient pause to look at it, in the agitation of

the blinding wind, the flying stones and sand, and the awful noise, confounded me. As the high watery walls came rolling in, and, at their highest, tumbled into surf, they looked as if the least would engulf the town. As the receding wave swept back with a hoarse roar, it seemed to scoop out deep caves in the beach, as if its purpose were to undermine the earth. When some white-headed billows thundered on, and dashed themselves to pieces before they reached the land, every fragment of the late whole seemed possessed by the full might of its wrath, rushing to be gathered to the composition of another monster. Undulating hills were changed to valleys, undulating valleys (with a solitary storm-bird sometimes skimming through them) were lifted up to hills; masses of water shivered and shook the beach with a booming sound; every shape tumultuously rolled on, as soon as made, to change its shape and place, and beat another shape and place away; the ideal shore on the horizon, with its towers and buildings, rose and fell; the clouds fell fast and thick; I seemed to see a rending and upheaving of all nature.

Not finding Ham among the people whom this memorable wind—for it is still remembered down there, as the greatest ever known to blow upon that coast—had brought together, I made my way to his house. It was shut; and as no one answered to my knocking, I went, by back ways and by-lanes, to the yard where he worked. I learned, there, that he had gone to Lowestoft, to meet some sudden exigency of ship-repairing in which his skill was required; but that he would be back to-morrow morning, in good time.

I went back to the inn ; and when I had washed and dressed, and tried to sleep, but in vain, it was five o'clock in the afternoon. I had not sat five minutes by the coffee-room fire, when the waiter coming to stir it, as an excuse for talking, told me that two colliers had gone down, with all hands, a few miles away ; and that some other ships had been seen labouring hard in the Roads, and trying, in great distress, to keep off shore. Mercy on them, and on all poor sailors, said he, if we had another night like the last !

I was very much depressed in spirits ; very solitary ; and felt an uneasiness in Ham's not being there, disproportionate to the occasion. I was seriously affected, without knowing how much, by late events ; and my long exposure to the fierce wind had confused me. There was that jumble in my thoughts and recollections, that I had lost the clear arrangement of time and distance. Thus, if I had gone out into the town, I should not have been surprised, I think, to encounter some one who I knew must be then in London. So to speak, there was in these respects a curious inattention in my mind. Yet it was busy, too, with all the remembrances the place naturally awakened ; and they were particularly distinct and vivid.

In this state, the waiter's dismal intelligence about the ships immediately connected itself, without any effort of my volition, with my uneasiness about Ham. I was persuaded that I had an apprehension of his returning from Lowestoft by sea, and being lost. This grew so strong with me, that I resolved to go back to the yard before I took my dinner, and ask

the boat-builder if he thought his attempting to return by sea at all likely? If he gave me the least reason to think so, I would go over to Lowestoft and prevent it by bringing him with me.

I hastily ordered my dinner, and went back to the yard. I was none too soon; for the boat-builder, with a lantern in his hand, was locking the yard-gate. He quite laughed when I asked him the question, and said there was no fear; no man in his senses, or out of them, would put off in such a gale of wind, least of all Ham Peggotty, who had been born to seafaring.

So sensible of this, beforehand, that I had really felt ashamed of doing what I was nevertheless impelled to do, I went back to the inn. If such a wind could rise, I think it was rising. The howl and roar, the rattling of the doors and windows, the rumbling in the chimneys, the apparent rocking of the very house that sheltered me, and the prodigious tumult of the sea, were more fearful than in the morning. But there was now a great darkness besides; and that invested the storm with new terrors, real and fanciful.

I could not eat, I could not sit still, I could not continue steadfast to anything. Something within me, faintly answering to the storm without, tossed up the depths of my memory and made a tumult in them. Yet, in all the hurry of my thoughts, wild running with the thundering sea—the storm and my uneasiness regarding Ham were always in the foreground.

My dinner went away almost untasted, and I tried to refresh myself with a glass or two of wine. In vain. I fell into a dull slumber before the fire, without losing my consciousness, either

of the uproar out of doors, or of the place in which I was. Both became overshadowed by a new, and indefinable horror ; and when I awoke—or rather when I shook off the lethargy that bound me in my chair—my whole frame thrilled with objectless and unintelligible fear.

I walked to and fro, tried to read an old gazetteer, listened to the awful noises ; looked at faces, scenes, and figures in the fire. At length, the steady ticking of the undisturbed clock on the wall tormented me to that degree that I resolved to go to bed.

It was reassuring, on such a night, to be told that some of the inn-servants had agreed together to sit up until morning. I went to bed, exceedingly weary and heavy ; but, on my lying down, all such sensations vanished, as if by magic, and I was broad awake, with every sense refined.

For hours I lay there, listening to the wind and water ; imagining, now, that I heard shrieks out at sea ; now, that I distinctly heard the firing of signal guns ; and now, the fall of houses in the town. I got up several times, and looked out ; but could see nothing, except the reflection in the window-panes of the faint candle I had left burning, and of my own haggard face looking in at me from the black void.

At length, my restlessness attained to such a pitch, that I hurried on my clothes, and went downstairs. In the large kitchen, where I dimly saw bacon and ropes of onions hanging from the beams, the watchers were clustered together, in various attitudes, about a table, purposely moved away from the great chimney, and brought near the door. A pretty girl, who had her ears stopped with her apron, and her eyes upon the door,

screamed when I appeared, supposing me to be a spirit; but the others had more presence of mind, and were glad of an addition to their company. One man, referring to the topic they had been discussing, asked me whether I thought the souls of the collier-crews who had gone down, were out in the storm?

I remained there, I dare say, two hours. Once, I opened the yard-gate, and looked into the empty street. The sand, the seaweed, and the flakes of foam, were driving by; and I was obliged to call for assistance before I could shut the gate again, and make it fast against the wind.

There was a dark gloom in my solitary chamber, when I at length returned to it; but I was tired now, and, getting into bed again, fell—off a tower and down a precipice—into the depths of sleep. I have an impression that for a long time, though I dreamed of being elsewhere and in a variety of scenes, it was always blowing in my dream. At length, I lost that feeble hold upon reality, and was engaged with two dear friends, but who they were I don't know, at the siege of some town in a roar of cannonading.

The thunder of the cannon was so loud and incessant, that I could not hear something I much desired to hear, until I made a great exertion and awoke. It was broad day—eight or nine o'clock; the storm raging, in lieu of the batteries; and some one knocking and calling at my door.

‘What is the matter?’ I cried.

‘A wreck! Close by!’

I sprung out of bed, and asked, what wreck?

‘A schooner, from Spain or Portugal, laden with fruit and wine. Make haste, sir, if you want to

see her ! It's thought, down on the beach, she'll go to pieces every moment.'

The excited voice went clamouring along the staircase ; and I wrapped myself in my clothes as quickly as I could, and ran into the street.

Numbers of people were there before me, all running in one direction to the beach. I ran the same way, outstripping a good many, and soon came facing the wild sea.

The wind might by this time have lulled a little, though not more sensibly than if the cannonading I had dreamed of had been diminished by the silencing of half a dozen guns out of hundreds. But the sea having upon it the additional agitation of the whole night, was infinitely more terrific than when I had seen it last. Every appearance it had then presented, bore the expression of being *swelled* ; and the height to which the breakers rose, and, looking over one another, bore one another down, and rolled in, in interminable hosts, was most appalling.

In the difficulty of hearing anything but wind and waves, and in the crowd, and the unspeakable confusion, and my first breathless efforts to stand against the weather, I was so confused that I looked out to sea for the wreck, and saw nothing but the foaming heads of the great waves. A half-dressed boatman, standing next me, pointed with his bare arm (a tattoo'd arrow on it, pointing in the same direction) to the left. Then, O great Heaven, I saw it, close in upon us !

One mast was broken short off, six or eight feet from the deck, and lay over the side, entangled in a maze of sail and rigging ; and all that ruin, as the ship rolled and beat—which she did without a moment's pause, and with a violence quite

inconceivable—beat the side as if it would stave it in. Some efforts were even then being made, to cut this portion of the wreck away; for as the ship, which was broadside on, turned towards us in her rolling, I plainly descried her people at work with axes, especially one active figure with long curling hair, conspicuous among the rest. But a great cry, which was audible even above the wind and water, rose from the shore at this moment; the sea, sweeping over the rolling wreck, made a clean breach, and carried men, spars, casks, planks, bulwarks, heaps of such toys, into the boiling surge.

The second mast was yet standing, with the rags of a rent sail, and a wild confusion of broken cordage flapping to and fro. The ship had struck once, the same boatman hoarsely said in my ear, and then lifted in and struck again. I understood him to add that she was parting amidships, and I could readily suppose so, for the rolling and beating were too tremendous for any human work to suffer long. As he spoke, there was another great cry of pity from the beach; four men arose with the wreck out of the deep, clinging to the rigging of the remaining mast; uppermost, the active figure with the curling hair.

There was a bell on board; and as the ship rolled and dashed, like a desperate creature driven mad, now showing us the whole sweep of her deck as she turned on her beam-ends towards the shore, now nothing but her keel, as she sprung wildly over and turned towards the sea, the bell rang; and its sound, the knell of those unhappy men, was borne towards us on the wind. Again we lost her, and again she rose. Two men were gone.

The agony on shore increased. Men groaned, and clasped their hands ; women shrieked, and turned away their faces. Some ran wildly up and down along the beach, crying for help where no help could be. I found myself one of these, frantically imploring a knot of sailors whom I knew, not to let those two lost creatures perish before our eyes.

They were making out to me, in an agitated way—I don't know how, for the little I could hear I was scarcely composed enough to understand—that the lifeboat had been bravely manned an hour ago, and could do nothing ; and that as no man would be so desperate as to attempt to wade off with a rope, and establish a communication with the shore, there was nothing left to try ; when I noticed that some new sensation moved the people on the beach, and saw them part, and Ham come breaking through them to the front.

I ran to him—as well as I know—to repeat my appeal for help. But, distracted though I was by a sight so new to me and terrible, the determination in his face, and his look out to sea—exactly the same look as I remembered in connexion with the morning after Emily's flight—awoke me to a knowledge of his danger. I held him back with both arms ; and implored the men with whom I had been speaking, not to listen to him, not to do murder, not to let him stir from off that sand !

Another cry arose on shore ; and looking to the wreck, we saw the cruel sail, with blow on blow, beat off the lower of the two men, and fly up in triumph round the active figure left alone upon the mast.

Against such a sight, and against such determination as that of the calmly desperate man

who was already accustomed to lead half the people present, I might as hopefully have entreated the wind. 'Mas'r Davy,' he said, cheerily grasping me by both hands, 'if my time is come, 'tis come. If 'tan't, I'll bide it. Lord above bless you, and bless all! Mates, make me ready! I'm a-going off!'

I was swept away, but not unkindly, to some distance, where the people around me made me stay; urging, as I confusedly perceived, that he was bent on going, with help or without, and that I should endanger the precautions for his safety by troubling those with whom they rested. I don't know what I answered, or what they rejoined; but I saw hurry on the beach, and men running with ropes from a capstan that was there, and penetrating into a circle of figures that hid him from me. Then, I saw him standing alone, in a seaman's frock and trousers: a rope in his hand, or slung to his wrist: another round his body: and several of the best men holding, at a little distance, to the latter, which he laid out himself, slack upon the shore, at his feet.

The wreck, even to my unpractised eye, was breaking up. I saw that she was parting in the middle, and that the life of the solitary man upon the mast hung by a thread. Still, he clung to it. He had a singular red cap on—not like a sailor's cap, but of a finer colour; and as the few yielding planks between him and destruction rolled and bulged, and his anticipative death-knell rung, he was seen by all of us to wave it. I saw him do it now, and thought I was going distracted, when his action brought an old remembrance to my mind of a once dear friend.

Ham watched the sea, standing alone, with the silence of suspended breath behind him, and the storm before, until there was a great retiring wave, when, with a backward glance at those who held the rope which was made fast round his body, he dashed in after it, and in a moment was buffeting with the water ; rising with the hills, falling with the valleys, lost beneath the foam ; then drawn again to land. They hauled in hastily.

He was hurt. I saw blood on his face, from where I stood ; but he took no thought of that. He seemed hurriedly to give them some directions for leaving him more free—or so I judged from the motion of his arm—and was gone as before.

And now he made for the wreck, rising with the hills, falling with the valleys, lost beneath the rugged foam, borne in towards the shore, borne on towards the ship, striving hard and valiantly. The distance was nothing, but the power of the sea and wind made the strife deadly. At length he neared the wreck. He was so near, that with one more of his vigorous strokes he would be clinging to it—when a high, green, vast hill-side of water, moving on shoreward, from beyond the ship, he seemed to leap up into it with a mighty bound, and the ship was gone !

Some eddying fragments I saw in the sea, as if a mere cask had been broken, in running to the spot where they were hauling in. Consternation was in every face. They drew him to my very feet—insensible—dead. He was carried to the nearest house ; and, no one preventing me now, I remained near him, busy, while every means of restoration were tried ; but he had been beaten to death by

the great wave, and his generous heart was stilled for ever.

As I sat beside the bed, when hope was abandoned and all was done, a fisherman, who had known me when Emily and I were children, and ever since, whispered my name at the door.

‘Sir,’ said he, with tears starting to his weather-beaten face, which, with his trembling lips, was ashy pale, ‘will you come over yonder?’

The old remembrance that had been recalled to me, was in his look. I asked him, terror-stricken, leaning on the arm he held out to support me:

‘Has a body come ashore?’

He said, ‘Yes.’

‘Do I know it?’ I asked then.

He answered nothing.

But he led me to the shore. And on that part of it where she and I had looked for shells, two children—on that part of it where some lighter fragments of the old boat, blown down last night, had been scattered by the wind—among the ruins of the home he had wronged—I saw him lying with his head upon his arm, as I had often seen him lie at school.—*David Copperfield.*

## JOHN LOTHROP MOTLEY .

1814-77

### THE RELIEF OF LEYDEN

THE preparation for the relief of Leyden, which, notwithstanding his exertions, had grown slack during his sickness, were now vigorously resumed. On the 1st of September, Admiral Boisot arrived

out of Zeland with a small number of vessels, and with eight hundred veteran sailors. A wild and ferocious crew were those eight hundred Zelanders. Scarred, hacked, and even maimed, in the unceasing conflicts in which their lives had passed; wearing crescents in their caps, with the inscription, 'Rather Turkish than Popish'; renowned far and wide, as much for their ferocity as for their nautical skill; the appearance of these wildest of the 'Sea beggars' was both eccentric and terrific. They were known never to give nor to take quarter, for they went to *mortal* combat only, and had sworn to spare neither noble nor simple, neither king, kaiser, nor pope, should they fall into their power.

More than two hundred vessels had been now assembled, carrying generally ten pieces of cannon, with from ten to eighteen oars, and manned with twenty-five hundred veterans, experienced both on land and water. The work was now undertaken in earnest. The distance from Leyden to the outer dyke over whose ruins the ocean had already been admitted, was nearly fifteen miles. This reclaimed territory, however, was not maintained against the sea by these external barriers alone. The flotilla made its way with ease to the Land-scheiding, a strong dyke within five miles of Leyden, but here its progress was arrested. The approach to the city was surrounded by many strong ramparts, one within the other, by which it was defended against its ancient enemy, the ocean, precisely like the circumvallations by means of which it was now assailed by its more recent enemy, the Spaniard. To enable the fleet, however, to sail over the land, it was necessary to break through this twofold

series of defences. Between the Land-scheiding and Leyden were several dykes, which kept out the water; upon the level territory, thus encircled, were many villages, together with a chain of sixty-two forts, which completely occupied the land. All these villages and fortresses were held by the veteran troops of the King; the besieging force being about four times as strong as that which was coming to the rescue.

The Prince had given orders that the Land-scheiding, which was still one-and-a-half foot above water, should be taken possession of, at every hazard. On the night of the 10th and 11th of September this was accomplished, by surprise, and in a masterly manner. The few Spaniards who had been stationed upon the dyke were all dispatched or driven off, and the patriots fortified themselves upon it, without the loss of a man. As the day dawned the Spaniards saw the fatal error which they had committed in leaving this bulwark so feebly defended, and from two villages which stood close to the dyke, the troops now rushed in considerable force to recover what they had lost. A hot action succeeded, but the patriots had too securely established themselves. They completely defeated the enemy, who retired, leaving hundreds of dead on the field, and the patriots in complete possession of the Land-scheiding. This first action was sanguinary and desperate. It gave an earnest of what these people, who came to relieve their brethren, by sacrificing their property and their lives, were determined to effect. It gave a revolting proof, too, of the intense hatred which nerved their arms. A Zelandier, having struck down a Spaniard on the dyke, knelt on his bleeding

enemy, tore his heart from his bosom, fastened his teeth in it for an instant, and then threw it to a dog, with the exclamation, ' 'Tis too bitter.' The Spanish heart was, however, rescued, and kept for years, with the marks of the soldier's teeth upon it, a sad testimonial of the ferocity engendered by this war for national existence.

The great dyke having been thus occupied, no time was lost in breaking it through in several places, a work which was accomplished under the very eyes of the enemy. The fleet sailed through the gaps ; but, after their passage had been effected in good order, the Admiral found, to his surprise, that it was not the only rampart to be carried. The Prince had been informed, by those who claimed to know the country, that, when once the Land-scheiding had been passed, the water would flood the country as far as Leyden, but the ' Greenway ', another long dyke, three-quarters of a mile further inward, now rose at least a foot above the water, to oppose their further progress. Fortunately, by a second and still more culpable carelessness, this dyke had been left by the Spaniards in as unprotected a state as the first had been. Promptly and audaciously Admiral Boisot took possession of this barrier also, levelled it in many places, and brought his flotilla, in triumph, over its ruins. Again, however, he was doomed to disappointment. A large mere, called the Fresh-water Lake, was known to extend itself directly in his path about midway between the Land-scheiding and the city. To this piece of water, into which he expected to have instantly floated, his only passage lay through one deep canal. The sea which had thus far borne him on, now diffusing itself over a very

wide surface, and under the influence of an adverse wind, had become too shallow for his ships. The canal alone was deep enough, but it led directly towards a bridge, strongly occupied by the enemy. Hostile troops, moreover, to the amount of three thousand, occupied both sides of the canal. The bold Boisot, nevertheless, determined to force his passage, if possible. Selecting a few of his strongest vessels, his heaviest artillery, and his bravest sailors, he led the van himself, in a desperate attempt to make his way to the mere. He opened a hot fire upon the bridge, then converted into a fortress, while his men engaged in hand-to-hand combat with a succession of skirmishers from the troops along the canal. After losing a few men, and ascertaining the impregnable position of the enemy, he was obliged to withdraw, defeated, and almost despairing.

A week had elapsed since the great dyke had been pierced, and the flotilla now lay motionless in shallow water, having accomplished less than two miles. The wind, too, was easterly, causing the sea rather to sink than to rise. Everything wore a gloomy aspect, when, fortunately, on the 18th, the wind shifted to the north-west, and for three days blew a gale. The waters rose rapidly, and before the second day was closed the armada was afloat again. Some fugitives from Zoetermeer village now arrived, and informed the Admiral that, by making a *détour* to the right, he could completely circumvent the bridge and the mere. They guided him, accordingly, to a comparatively low dyke, which led between the villages of Zoetermeer and Benthuyzen. A strong force of Spaniards was stationed in each place, but, seized with

a panic, instead of sallying to defend the barrier, they fled inwardly towards Leyden, and halted at the village of North Aa. It was natural that they should be amazed. Nothing is more appalling to the imagination than the rising ocean tide, when man feels himself within its power ; and here were the waters, hourly deepening and closing around them, devouring the earth beneath their feet, while on the waves rode a flotilla, manned by a determined race, whose courage and ferocity were known throughout the world. The Spanish soldiers, brave as they were on land, were not sailors, and in the naval contests which had taken place between them and the Hollanders had been almost invariably defeated. It was not surprising, in these amphibious skirmishes, where discipline was of little avail, and habitual audacity faltered at the vague dangers which encompassed them, that the foreign troops should lose their presence of mind.

Three barriers, one within the other, had now been passed, and the flotilla, advancing with the advancing waves, and driving the enemy steadily before it, was drawing nearer to the beleaguered city. As one circle after another was passed, the besieging army found itself compressed within a constantly contracting field. The 'Ark of Delft,' an enormous vessel, with shot-proof bulwarks, and moved by paddle-wheels turned by a crank, now arrived at Zoetermeer, and was soon followed by the whole fleet. After a brief delay, sufficient to allow the few remaining villagers to escape, both Zoetermeer and Benthuyzen, with the fortifications, were set on fire, and abandoned to their fate. The blaze lighted up the desolate and watery waste around, and was seen at Leyden, where it was

hailed as the beacon of hope. Without further impediment, the armada proceeded to North Aa, the enemy retreating from this position also, and flying to Zoeterwoude, a strongly fortified village, but a mile and three-quarters from the city walls. It was now swarming with troops, for the bulk of the besieging army had gradually been driven into a narrow circle of forts, within the immediate neighbourhood of Leyden. Besides Zoeterwoude, the two posts where they were principally established were Lammen and Leyderdorp, each within three hundred rods of the town. At Leyderdorp were the head-quarters of Valdez; Colonel Borgia commanded in the very strong fortress of Lammen.

The fleet was, however, delayed at North Aa by another barrier, called the 'Kirk-way'. The waters, too, spreading once more over a wider space, and diminishing under an east wind, which had again arisen, no longer permitted their progress, so that very soon the whole armada was stranded anew. The waters fell to the depth of nine inches, while the vessels required eighteen and twenty. Day after day the fleet lay motionless upon the shallow sea. Orange, rising from his sick bed as soon as he could stand, now came on board the fleet. His presence diffused universal joy; his words inspired his desponding army with fresh hope. He rebuked the impatient spirits who, weary of their compulsory idleness, had shown symptoms of ill-timed ferocity, and those eight hundred mad Zelanders, so frantic in their hatred to the foreigners, who had so long profaned their land, were as docile as children to the Prince. He reconnoitred the whole ground, and issued orders for the immediate destruction of the Kirk-way, the

last important barrier which separated the fleet from Leyden. Then, after a long conference with Admiral Boisot, he returned to Delft.

Meantime, the besieged city was at its last gasp. The burghers had been in a state of uncertainty for many days ; being aware that the fleet had set forth for their relief, but knowing full well the thousand obstacles which it had to surmount. They had guessed its progress by the illumination from the blazing villages ; they had heard its salvos of artillery, on its arrival at North Aa ; but since then, all had been dark and mournful again, hope and fear, in sickening alternation, distracting every breast. They knew that the wind was unfavourable, and at the dawn of each day every eye was turned wistfully to the vanes of the steeples. So long as the easterly breeze prevailed, they felt, as they anxiously stood on towers and house-tops, that they must look in vain for the welcome ocean. Yet, while thus patiently waiting, they were literally starving ; for even the misery endured at Haarlem had not reached that depth and intensity of agony to which Leyden was now reduced. Bread, malt-cake, horseflesh, had entirely disappeared ; dogs, cats, rats, and other vermin, were esteemed luxuries. A small number of cows, kept as long as possible for their milk, still remained ; but a few were killed from day to day, and distributed in minute proportions, hardly sufficient to support life among the famishing population. Starving wretches swarmed daily around the shambles where these cattle were slaughtered, contending for any morsel which might fall, and lapping eagerly the blood as it ran along the pavement ; while the hides, chopped

and boiled, were greedily devoured. Women and children, all day long, were seen searching gutters and dunghills for morsels of food, which they disputed fiercely with the famishing dogs. The green leaves were stripped from the trees, every living herb was converted into human food, but these expedients could not avert starvation. The daily mortality was frightful—infants starved to death on the maternal breasts, which famine had parched and withered; mothers dropped dead in the streets, with their dead children in their arms. In many a house the watchmen, in their rounds, found a whole family of corpses, father, mother, children, side by side, for a disorder called the plague, naturally engendered of hardship and famine, now came, as if in kindness, to abridge the agony of the people. The pestilence stalked at noonday through the city, and the doomed inhabitants fell like grass beneath its scythe. From six thousand to eight thousand human beings sank before this scourge alone, yet the people resolutely held out—women and men mutually encouraging each other to resist the entrance of their foreign foe—an evil more horrible than pest or famine.

The missives from Valdez, who saw more vividly than the besieged could do, the uncertainty of his own position, now poured daily into the city, the enemy becoming more prodigal of his vows, as he felt that the ocean might yet save the victims from his grasp. The inhabitants, in their ignorance, had gradually abandoned their hopes of relief, but they spurned the summons to surrender. Leyden was sublime in its despair. A few murmurs were, however, occasionally heard at the steadfastness of the magistrates, and a dead body was placed at the

door of the burgomaster, as a silent witness against his inflexibility. A party of the more faint-hearted even assailed the heroic Adrian van der Werf with threats and reproaches as he passed through the streets. A crowd had gathered around him, as he reached a triangular place in the centre of the town, into which many of the principal streets emptied themselves, and upon one side of which stood the Church of Saint Pancras, with its high brick tower surmounted by two pointed turrets, and with two ancient lime-trees at its entrance. There stood the burgomaster, a tall, haggard, imposing figure, with dark visage, and a tranquil but commanding eye. He waved his broad-leaved felt hat for silence, and then exclaimed, in language which has been almost literally preserved, 'What would ye, my friends? Why do ye murmur that we do not break our vows and surrender the city to the Spaniards? a fate more horrible than the agony which she now endures. I tell you I have made an oath to hold the city, and may God give me strength to keep my oath! I can die but once; whether by your hands, the enemy's, or by the hand of God. My own fate is indifferent to me, not so that of the city entrusted to my care. I know that we shall starve if not soon relieved; but starvation is preferable to the dishonoured death which is the only alternative. Your menaces move me not; my life is at your disposal; here is my sword, plunge it into my breast, and divide my flesh among you. Take my body to appease your hunger, but expect no surrender, so long as I remain alive.'

The words of the stout burgomaster inspired a new courage in the hearts of those who heard

him, and a shout of applause and defiance arose from the famishing but enthusiastic crowd. They left the place, after exchanging new vows of fidelity to their magistrate, and again ascended tower and battlement to watch for the coming fleet. From the ramparts they hurled renewed defiance at the enemy. 'Ye call us rat-eaters and dog-eaters,' they cried, 'and it is true. So long, then, as ye hear dog bark or cat mew within the walls, ye may know that the city holds out. And when all has perished but ourselves, be sure that we will each devour our left arms, retaining our right to defend our women, our liberty, and our religion, against the foreign tyrant. Should God, in his wrath, doom us to destruction, and deny us all relief, even then we will maintain ourselves for ever against your entrance. When the last hour has come, with our hands we will set fire to the city, and perish, men, women, and children together, in the flames, rather than suffer our homes to be polluted, and our liberties to be crushed.' Such words of defiance, thundered daily from the battlements, sufficiently informed Valdez as to his chance of conquering the city, either by force or fraud, but at the same time, he felt comparatively relieved by the inactivity of Boisot's fleet, which still lay stranded at North Aa. 'As well,' shouted the Spaniards, derisively, to the citizens, 'as well can the Prince of Orange pluck the stars from the sky as bring the ocean to the walls of Leyden for your relief.'

On the 28th of September, a dove flew into the city, bringing a letter from Admiral Boisot. In this dispatch, the position of the fleet at North Aa was described in encouraging terms, and the

inhabitants were assured that in a very few days at furthest, the long-expected relief would enter their gates. The letter was read publicly upon the market-place, and the bells were rung for joy. Nevertheless, on the morrow, the vanes pointed to the east, the waters, so far from rising, continued to sink, and Admiral Boisot was almost in despair. He wrote to the Prince, that if the spring-tide, now to be expected, should not, together with a strong and favourable wind, come immediately to their relief, it would be in vain to attempt anything further, and that the expedition would, of necessity, be abandoned. The tempest came to their relief. A violent equinoctial gale, on the night of the 1st and 2nd of October, came storming from the north-west, shifting after a few hours full eight points, and then blowing still more violently from the south-west. The waters of the North Sea were piled in vast masses upon the southern coast of Holland, and then dashed furiously landward, the ocean rising over the earth, and sweeping with unrestrained power across the ruined dykes.

In the course of twenty-four hours the fleet at North Aa, instead of nine inches, had more than two feet of water. No time was lost. The Kirkway, which had been broken through according to the Prince's instructions, was now completely overflowed, and the fleet sailed at midnight, in the midst of the storm and darkness. A few sentinel vessels of the enemy challenged them as they steadily rowed towards Zoeterwoude. The answer was a flash from Boisot's cannon, lighting up the black waste of waters. There was a fierce naval midnight battle; a strange spectacle among the branches of those quiet orchards, and with

the chimney stacks of half-submerged farm-houses rising around the contending vessels. The neighbouring village Zoeterwoude shook with the discharges of the Zelanders' cannon, and the Spaniards assembled in that fortress knew that the rebel Admiral was at last afloat and on his course. The enemy's vessels were soon sunk, and their crews hurled into the waves. On went the fleet, sweeping over the broad waters which lay between Zoeterwoude and Zwieten. As they approached some shallows, which led into the great mere, the Zelanders dashed into the sea, and with sheer strength shouldered every vessel through. Two obstacles lay still in their path—the forts of Zoeterwoude and Lammen, distant from the city five hundred and two hundred and fifty yards respectively. Strong redoubts, both well supplied with troops and artillery, they were likely to give a rough reception to the light flotilla, but the panic, which had hitherto driven their foes before the advancing patriots, had reached Zoeterwoude. Hardly was the fleet in sight when the Spaniards in the early morning, poured out from the fortress, and fled precipitately to the left, along a road which led in a westerly direction towards the Hague. Their narrow path was rapidly vanishing in the waves, and hundreds sank beneath the constantly-deepening and treacherous flood. The wild Zelanders, too, sprang from their vessels upon the crumbling dyke and drove their retreating foes into the sea. They hurled their harpoons at them, with an accuracy acquired in many a polar chase; they plunged into the waves in keen pursuit, attacking them with boat-hook and dagger. The numbers who thus fell beneath these corsairs, who

neither gave nor took quarter, were never counted, but probably not less than a thousand perished. The rest effected their escape to the Hague.

The first fortress was thus seized, dismantled, set on fire, and passed, and a few strokes of the oars brought the whole fleet close to Lammen. This last obstacle rose formidable and frowning directly across their path. Swarming as it was with soldiers, and bristling with artillery, it seemed to defy the armada either to carry it by storm or to pass under its guns into the city. It appeared that the enterprise was, after all, to founder within sight of the long-expecting and expected haven. Boisot anchored his fleet within a respectful distance, and spent what remained of the day in carefully reconnoitring the fort, which seemed only too strong. In conjunction with Leyderdorp, the head-quarters of Valdez, a mile and a half distant on the right, and within a mile of the city, it seemed so insuperable an impediment that Boisot wrote in despondent tone to the Prince of Orange. He announced his intention of carrying the fort, if it were possible, on the following morning, but if obliged to retreat, he observed, with something like despair, that there would be nothing for it but to wait for another gale of wind. If the waters should rise sufficiently to enable them to make a wide *détour*, it might be possible, if, in the meantime, Leyden did not starve or surrender, to enter its gates from the opposite side.

Meantime, the citizens had grown wild with expectation. A dove had been dispatched by Boisot, informing them of his precise position, and a number of citizens accompanied the burgomaster, at nightfall, toward the tower of Hengist—

‘Yonder,’ cried the magistrate, stretching out his hand towards Lammen, ‘yonder, behind that fort, are bread and meat, and brethren in thousands. Shall all this be destroyed by the Spanish guns, or shall we rush to the rescue of our friends?’ ‘We will tear the fortress to fragments with our teeth and nails,’ was the reply, ‘before the relief, so long expected, shall be wrested from us.’ It was resolved that a sortie, in conjunction with the operations of Boisot, should be made against Lammen with the earliest dawn. Night descended upon the scene, a pitch dark night, full of anxiety to the Spaniards, to the armada, to Leyden. Strange sights and sounds occurred at different moments to bewilder the anxious sentinels. A long procession of lights issuing from the fort was seen to flit across the black face of the waters, in the dead of night, and the whole of the city wall, between the Cow-gate and the Tower of Burgundy, fell with a loud crash. The horror-struck citizens thought that the Spaniards were upon them at last; the Spaniards imagined the noise to indicate a desperate sortie of the citizens. Everything was vague and mysterious.

Day dawned, at length, after the feverish night, and the Admiral prepared for the assault. Within the fortress reigned a death-like stillness, which inspired a sickening suspicion. Had the city, indeed, been carried in the night; had the massacre already commenced; had all this labour and audacity been expended in vain? Suddenly a man was descried, wading breast-high through the water from Lammen towards the fleet, while at the same time, one solitary boy was seen to wave his cap from the summit of the fort. After a moment of

doubt, the happy mystery was solved. The Spaniards had fled, panic-struck, during the darkness. Their position would still have enabled them, with firmness, to frustrate the enterprise of the patriots, but the hand of God, which had sent the ocean and the tempest to the deliverance of Leyden, had struck her enemies with terror likewise. The lights which had been seen moving during the night were the lanterns of the retreating Spaniards, and the boy who was now waving his triumphant signal from the battlements had alone witnessed the spectacle. So confident was he in the conclusion to which it led him, that he had volunteered at daybreak to go thither all alone. The magistrates, fearing a trap, hesitated for a moment to believe the truth, which soon, however, became quite evident. Valdez, flying himself from Leyderdorp, had ordered Colonel Borgia to retire with all his troops from Lammen. Thus, the Spaniards had retreated at the very moment that an extraordinary accident had laid bare a whole side of the city for their entrance. The noise of the wall, as it fell, only inspired them with fresh alarm; for they believed that the citizens had sallied forth in the darkness, to aid the advancing flood in the work of destruction. All obstacles being now removed, the fleet of Boisot swept by Lammen, and entered the city on the morning of the 3rd of October. Leyden was relieved.

The quays were lined with the famishing population, as the fleet rowed through the canals, every human being who could stand coming forth to greet the preservers of the city. Bread was thrown from every vessel among the crowd. The poor creatures who for two months had tasted no wholesome

human food, and who had literally been living within the jaws of death, snatched eagerly the blessed gift, at last too liberally bestowed. Many choked themselves to death, in the greediness with which they devoured their bread; others became ill with the effects of plenty thus suddenly succeeding starvation;—but these were isolated cases, a repetition of which was prevented. The Admiral, stepping ashore, was welcomed by the magistracy, and a solemn procession was immediately formed. Magistrates and citizens, wild Zelanders, emaciated burgher guards, sailors, soldiers, women, children—nearly every living person within the walls, all repaired without delay to the great church, stout Admiral Boisot leading the way. The starving and heroic city, which had been so firm in its resistance to an earthly king, now bent itself in humble gratitude before the King of kings. After prayers, the whole vast congregation joined in the thanksgiving hymn. Thousands of voices raised the song, but few were able to carry it to its conclusion, for the universal emotion, deepened by the music, became too full for utterance. The hymn was abruptly suspended, while the multitude wept like children. This scene of honest pathos terminated, the necessary measures for distributing the food and for relieving the sick were taken by the magistracy. A note dispatched to the Prince of Orange was received by him at two o'clock, as he sat in church at Delft. It was of a somewhat different purport from that of the letter which he had received early in the same day from Boisot; the letter in which the Admiral had informed him that the success of the enterprise depended, after all, upon the desperate assault upon a nearly

impregnable fort. The joy of the Prince may be easily imagined, and so soon as the sermon was concluded, he handed the letter just received to the minister, to be read to the congregation. Thus, all participated in his joy, and united with him in thanksgiving.

The next day, notwithstanding the urgent entreaties of his friends, who were anxious lest his life should be endangered by breathing, in his scarcely convalescent state, the air of the city where so many thousands had been dying of the pestilence, the Prince repaired to Leyden. He, at least, had never doubted his own or his country's fortitude. They could, therefore, most sincerely congratulate each other, now that the victory had been achieved. 'If we are doomed to perish,' he had said a little before the commencement of the siege, 'in the name of God, be it so ! At any rate, we shall have the honour to have done what no nation ever did before us, that of having defended and maintained ourselves, unaided, in so small a country, against the tremendous efforts of such powerful enemies. So long as the poor inhabitants here, though deserted by all the world, hold firm, it will still cost the Spaniards the half of Spain, in money and in men, before they can make an end of us.'

The termination of the terrible siege of Leyden was a convincing proof to the Spaniards that they had not yet made an end of the Hollanders. It furnished, also, a sufficient presumption that until they *had* made an end of them, even unto the last Hollander, there would never be an end of the struggle in which they were engaged. It was a slender consolation to the Governor-General,

that his troops had been vanquished, not by the enemy, but by the ocean. An enemy whom the ocean obeyed with such docility might well be deemed invincible by man. In the head-quarters of Valdez, at Leyderdorp, many plans of Leyden and the neighbourhood were found lying in confusion about the room. Upon the table was a hurried farewell of that General to the scenes of his discomfiture, written in a Latin worthy of Juan Vargas: 'Vale civitas, valet castelli parvi, qui relictis estis propter aquam et non per vim inimicorum!' In his precipitate retreat before the advancing rebels, the commander had but just found time for this elegant effusion, and for his parting instructions to Colonel Borgia that the fortress of Lammen was to be forthwith abandoned. These having been reduced to writing, Valdez had fled so speedily as to give rise to much censure and more scandal. He was even accused of having been bribed by the Hollanders to desert his post, a tale which many repeated, and a few believed. On the 4th of October, the day following that on which the relief of the city was effected, the wind shifted to the north-east, and again blew a tempest. It was as if the waters, having now done their work, had been rolled back to the ocean by an Omnipotent hand, for in the course of a few days, the land was bare again, and the work of reconstructing the dykes commenced.—*Rise of the Dutch Republic.*

# CHARLES READE

1814-84

## A FIGHT WITH A BEAR

ONE day, being in the forest a few leagues from Dusseldorf, as Gerard was walking like one in a dream, thinking of Margaret, and scarce seeing the road he trode, his companion laid a hand on his shoulder, and strung his cross-bow with glittering eye. 'Hush!' said he in a low whisper that startled Gerard more than thunder. Gerard grasped his axe tight, and shook a little: he heard a rustling in the wood hard by, and at the same moment Denys sprang into the wood, and his cross-bow went to his shoulder, even as he jumped. Twang! went the metal string; and after an instant's suspense he roared, 'Run forward, guard the road, he is hit! he is hit!'

Gerard darted forward, and, as he ran, a young bear burst out of the wood right upon him: finding itself intercepted, it went upon its hind legs with a snarl, and, though not half grown, opened formidable jaws and long claws. Gerard, in a fury of excitement and agitation, flung himself on it, and delivered a tremendous blow on its nose with his axe, and the creature staggered; another, and it lay grovelling with Gerard hacking it.

'Hallo! stop! you are mad to spoil the meat.'

'I took it for a robber,' said Gerard, panting. 'I mean I had made ready for a robber, so I could not hold my hand.'

'Ay, these chattering travellers have stuffed your head full of thieves and assassins: they have not

got a real live robber in their whole nation. Nay, I'll carry the beast ; bear thou my cross-bow.'

'We will carry it by turns then,' said Gerard, 'for 'tis a heavy load ; poor thing, how its blood drips. Why did we slay it ?'

'For supper and the reward the baillie of the next town shall give us.'

'And for that it must die, when it had but just begun to live : and perchance it hath a mother that will miss it sore this night, and loves it as ours love us ; more than mine does me.'

'What, know you not that his mother was caught in a pitfall last month, and her skin is now at the tanner's ? and his father was stuck full of cloth-yard shafts t'other day, and died like Julius Caesar, with his hands folded on his bosom, and a dead dog in each of them ?'

But Gerard would not view it jestingly : 'Why then,' said he, 'we have killed one of God's creatures that was all alone in the world—as I am this day, in this strange land.'

'You young milksop,' roared Denys, 'these things must not be looked at so, or not another bow would be drawn nor quarrel fly in forest nor battle-field. Why, one of your kidney consorting with a troop of pike-men should turn them to a row of milk-pails : it is ended, to Rome thou goest not alone ; for never wouldst thou reach the Alps in a whole skin. I take thee to Remiremont, my native place, and there I marry thee to my young sister, she is blooming as a peach. Thou shakest thy head ! ah ! I forgot ; thou lovest elsewhere, and art a one-woman man, a creature to me scarce conceivable. Well then I shall find thee, not a wife, nor a leman, but a friend ; some honest Burgundian

who shall go with thee as far as Lyons ; and much I doubt that honest fellow will be myself, into whose liquor thou hast dropped sundry powders to make me love thee ; for erst I endured not doves in doublet and hose. From Lyons, I say, I can trust thee by ship to Italy, which being by all accounts the very stronghold of milksops, thou wilt there be safe ! they will hear thy words, and make thee their duke in a twinkling.'

Gerard sighed : ' In sooth I love not to think of this Dusseldorf, where we are to part company, good friend.'

They walked silently, each thinking of the separation at hand ; the thought checked trifling conversation, and at these moments it is a relief to do something, however insignificant. Gerard asked Denys to lend him a bolt. ' I have often shot with a long-bow, but never with one of these ! '

' Draw thy knife and cut this one out of the cub,' said Denys, slily.

' Nay, nay, I want a clean one.'

Denys gave him three out of his quiver.

Gerard strung the bow, and levelled it at a bough that had fallen into the road at some distance. The power of the instrument surprised him ; the short but thick steel bow jarred him to the very heel as it went off, and the swift steel shaft was invisible in its passage ; only the dead leaves, with which November had carpeted the narrow road, flew about on the other side of the bough.

' Ye aimed a thought too high,' said Denys.

' What a deadly thing ! no wonder it is driving out the long-bow—to Martin's much discontent.'

' Ay, lad,' said Denys, triumphantly, ' it gains ground every day, in spite of their laws and their

proclamations to keep up the yewen bow, because forsooth their grandsires shot with it, knowing no better. You see, Gerard, war is not pastime. Men will shoot at their enemies with the hittingest arm and the killingest, not with the longest and mis-singest.'

'Then these new engines I hear of will put both bows down; for these, with a pinch of black dust, and a leaden ball, and a child's finger shall slay you Mars and Goliath, and the Seven Champions.'

'Pooh! pooh!' said Denys, warmly; 'petronel nor harquebuss shall ever put down Sir Arbalest. Why, we can shoot ten times while they are putting their charcoal and their lead into their leathern smoke belchers, and then kindling their matches. All that is too fumbling for the field of battle; there a soldier's weapon needs be ay ready, like his heart.'

Gerard did not answer; for his ear was attracted by a sound behind them. It was a peculiar sound, too, like something heavy, but not hard, rushing softly over the dead leaves. He turned round with some little curiosity. A colossal creature was coming down the road at about sixty paces distance.

He looked at it in a sort of calm stupor at first; but the next moment he turned ashy pale.

'Denys!' he cried. 'O God! Denys!'

Denys whirled round.

It was a bear as big as a cart-horse.

It was tearing along with its huge head down, running on a hot scent.

The very moment he saw it Denys said in a sickening whisper—

'THE CUB!'

Oh! the concentrated horror of that one word,

whispered hoarsely, with dilating eyes ! For in that syllable it all flashed upon them both like a sudden stroke of lightning in the dark—the bloody trail, the murdered cub, the mother upon them, *and it*. DEATH.

All this in a moment of time. The next, she saw them. Huge as she was, she seemed to double herself (it was her long hair bristling with rage) : she raised her head big as a bull's, her swine-shaped jaws opened wide at them, her eyes turned to blood and flame, and she rushed upon them, scattering the leaves about her like a whirlwind as she came.

'Shoot !' screamed Denys, but Gerard stood shaking from head to foot, useless.

'Shoot, man ! ten thousand devils, shoot ! too late ! Tree ! tree !' and he dropped the cub, pushed Gerard across the road, and flew to the first tree and climbed it, Gerard the same on his side ; and, as they fled, both men uttered inhuman howls like savage creatures grazed by death.

With all their speed one or other would have been torn to fragments at the foot of his tree ; but the bear stopped a moment at the cub.

Without taking her bloodshot eyes off those she was hunting, she smelt it all round, and found, how, her Creator only knows, that it was dead, quite dead. She gave a yell such as neither of the hunted ones had ever heard, nor dreamed to be in nature ; and flew after Denys. She reared and struck at him as he climbed. He was just out of reach.

Instantly she seized the tree, and with her huge teeth tore a great piece out of it with a crash. Then she reared again, dug her claws deep into the bark, and began to mount it slowly, but as surely as a monkey.

Denys's evil star had led him to a dead tree, a mere shaft, and of no very great height. He climbed faster than his pursuer, and was soon at the top. He looked this way and that for some bough of another tree to spring to. There was none: and, if he jumped down, he knew the bear would be upon him ere he could recover the fall, and make short work of him. Moreover Denys was little used to turning his back on danger, and his blood was rising at being hunted. He turned to bay.

'My hour is come,' thought he. 'Let me meet death like a man.' He kneeled down and grasped a small shoot to steady himself, drew his long knife, and, clenching his teeth, prepared to job the huge brute as soon as it should mount within reach.

Of this combat the result was not doubtful.

The monster's head and neck were scarce vulnerable for bone and masses of hair. The man was going to sting the bear, and the bear to crack the man like a nut.

Gerard's heart was better than his nerves. He saw his friend's mortal danger, and passed at once from fear to blindish rage. He slipped down his tree in a moment, caught up the cross-bow, which he had dropped in the road, and, running furiously up, sent a bolt into the bear's body with a loud shout. The bear gave a snarl of rage and pain, and turned its head irresolutely.

'Keep aloof!' cried Denys, 'or you are a dead man.'

'I care not'; and in a moment he had another bolt ready and shot it fiercely into the bear, screaming, 'Take that! take that!'

Denys poured a vollet of oaths down at him. 'Get away, idiot!'

He was right : the bear finding so formidable and noisy a foe behind him slipped growling down the tree, rending deep furrows in it as she slipped. Gerard ran back to his tree and climbed it swiftly. But while his legs were dangling some eight feet from the ground, the bear came rearing and struck with her fore paw, and out flew a piece of bloody cloth from Gerard's hose. He climbed, and climbed ; and presently he heard as it were in the air a voice say, ' Go out on the bough ! ' He looked, and there was a long massive branch before him shooting upwards at a slight angle : he threw his body across it, and by a series of convulsive efforts worked up it to the end.

Then he looked round panting.

The bear was mounting the tree on the other side. He heard her claws scrape, and saw her bulge on both sides of the massive tree. Her eye not being very quick she reached the fork and passed it, mounting the main stem. Gerard drew breath more freely. The bear either heard him, or found by scent she was wrong : she paused ; presently she caught sight of him. She eyed him steadily ; then quietly descended to the fork.

Slowly and cautiously she stretched out a paw and tried the bough. It was a stiff oak branch, sound as iron. Instinct taught the creature this : it crawled carefully out on the bough, growling savagely as it came.

Gerard looked wildly down. He was forty feet from the ground. Death below. Death moving slow but sure on him in a still more horrible form. His hair bristled. The sweat poured from him. He sat helpless, fascinated, tongue-tied.

As the fearful monster crawled growling towards

him, incongruous thoughts coursed through his mind. Margaret: the Vulgate, where it speaks of the rage of a she-bear robbed of her whelps—Rome—Eternity.

The bear crawled on. And now the stupor of death fell on the doomed man; he saw the open jaws and bloodshot eyes coming, but in a mist.

As in a mist he heard a twang: he glanced down. Denys, white and silent as death, was shooting up at the bear. The bear snarled at the twang; but crawled on. Again the crossbow twanged; and the bear snarled; and came nearer. Again the cross-bow twanged: and the next moment the bear was close upon Gerard, where he sat, with hair standing stiff on end, and eyes starting from their sockets, palsied. The bear opened her jaws like a grave; and hot blood spouted from them upon Gerard as from a pump. The bough rocked. The wounded monster was reeling; it clung, it stuck its sickles of claws deep into the wood; it toppled, its claws held firm, but its body rolled off, and the sudden shock to the branch shook Gerard forward on his stomach with his face upon one of the bear's straining paws. At this, by a convulsive effort she raised her head up, up, till he felt her hot fetid breath. Then huge teeth snapped together loudly close below him in the air, with a last effort of baffled hate. The ponderous carcass rent the claws out of the bough; then pounded the earth with a tremendous thump. There was a shout of triumph below, and the very next instant a cry of dismay; for Gerard had swooned, and, without an attempt to save himself, rolled headlong from the perilous height.—*The Cloister and the Hearth.*

## A FIGHT WITH ROBBERS

THIS delay, however, somewhat put out Denys's calculations, and evening surprised them ere they reached a little town he was making for, where was a famous hotel. However, they fell in with a roadside auberge, and Denys, seeing a buxom girl at the door, said, 'This seems a decent inn', and led the way into the kitchen. They ordered supper, to which no objection was raised, only the landlord requested them to pay for it beforehand. It was not an uncommon proposal in any part of the world. Still it was not universal, and Denys was nettled, and dashed his hand somewhat ostentatiously into his purse and pulled out a gold angel. 'Count me the change, and speedily,' said he. 'You tavern-keepers are more likely to rob me than I you.'

While the supper was preparing, Denys disappeared, and was eventually found by Gerard in the yard, helping Manon, his plump but not bright decoy duck, to draw water, and pouring extravagant compliments into her dullish ear. Gerard grunted and returned to table, and Denys did not come in for a good quarter of an hour.

'Up-hill work at the end of a march,' said he, shrugging his shoulders.

'What matters that to you?' said Gerard, drily. 'The mad dog bites all the world.'

'Exaggerator. You know I bite but the fairer half. Well, here comes supper; that is better worth biting.'

During supper the girl kept constantly coming in and out, and looking point-blank at them, especially at Denys; and at last in leaning over

him to remove a dish, dropped a word in his ear ; and he replied with a nod.

As soon as supper was cleared away, Denys rose and strolled to the door, telling Gerard the sullen fair had relented, and given him a little rendezvous in the stable-yard.

Gerard suggested that the cow-house would have been a more appropriate locality. ' I shall go to bed, then,' said he, a little crossly. ' Where is the landlord ? out at this time of night ? no matter. I know our room. Shall you be long, pray ? '

' Not I. I grudge leaving the fire and thee. But what can I do ? There are two sorts of invitations a Burgundian never declines.'

Denys found a figure seated by the well. It was Manon ; but instead of receiving him as he thought he had a right to expect, coming by invitation, all she did was to sob. He asked her what ailed her ? She sobbed. Could he do anything for her ? She sobbed.

The good-natured Denys, driven to his wits' end, which was no great distance, proffered the custom of the country by way of consolation. She repulsed him roughly, ' Is it a time for fooling ? ' said she, and sobbed.

' You seem to think so,' said Denys, waxing wroth. But the next moment, he added, tenderly, ' and I who could never bear to see beauty in distress.'

' It is not for myself.'

' Who then ? your sweetheart ? '

' Oh, que nenni. My sweetheart is not on earth now : and to think I have not an écu to buy masses for his soul ; ' and in this shallow nature the grief seemed now to be all turned in another direction.

‘Come, come,’ said Denys, ‘shalt have money to buy masses for thy dead lad ; I swear it. Meantime tell me why you weep.’

‘For you.’

‘For me ? Art mad ?’

‘No. I am not mad. ’Tis you that were mad to open your purse before him.’

The mystery seemed to thicken, and Denys wearied of stirring up the mud by questions, held his peace to see if it would not clear of itself. Then the girl finding herself no longer questioned seemed to go through some internal combat. At last she said, doggedly and aloud, ‘I will. The Virgin give me courage ! What matters it if they kill me, since he is dead ? Soldier, the landlord is out.’

‘Oh, is he ?’

‘What, do landlords leave their taverns at this time of night ? also see what a tempest ! We are sheltered here, but t’other side it blows a hurricane.’

Denys said nothing.

‘He is gone to fetch the band.’

‘The band ! what band ?’

‘Those who will cut your throat and take your gold. Wretched man ; to go and shake gold in an innkeeper’s face !’

The blow came so unexpectedly it staggered even Denys, accustomed as he was to sudden perils. He muttered a single word, but in it a volume.

‘Gerard !’

‘Gerard ! What is that ? Oh, ’tis thy comrade’s name, poor lad. Get him out quick ere they come ; and fly to the next town.’

‘And thou ?’

‘They will kill me.’

‘That they shall not. Fly with us.’

‘ ’Twill avail me nought : one of the band will be sent to kill me. They are sworn to slay all who betray them.’

‘ I’ll take thee to my native place full thirty leagues from hence, and put thee under my own mother’s wing, ere they shall hurt a hair o’ thy head. But first Gerard. Stay thou here whilst I fetch him ! ’

As he was darting off, the girl seized him convulsively, and with all the iron strength excitement lends to women. ‘ Stay me not ! for pity’s sake,’ he cried ; ‘ ’tis life or death.’

‘ Sh !—sh ! ’ whispered the girl, shutting his mouth hard with her hand, and putting her pale lips close to him, and her eyes, that seemed to turn backwards, straining towards some indistinct sound.

He listened.

He heard footsteps, many footsteps ; and no voices. She whispered in his ear, ‘ They are come.’

And trembled like a leaf.

Denys felt it was so. Travellers in that number would never have come in dead silence.

The feet were now at the very door.

‘ How many ? ’ said he in a hollow whisper.

‘ Hush ! ’ and she put her mouth to his very ear.

And who, that had seen this man and woman in that attitude, would have guessed what freezing hearts were theirs, and what terrible whispers passed between them ?

‘ Seven.’

‘ How armed ? ’

‘ Sword and dagger : and the giant with his axe. They call him the Abbot.’

‘ And my comrade ? ’

‘ Nothing can save him. Better lose one life than two. Fly ! ’

Denys’s blood froze at this cynical advice. ‘ Poor creature, you know not a soldier’s heart.’

He put his head in his hands a moment, and a hundred thoughts of dangers baffled whirled through his brain.

‘ Listen, girl ! There is one chance for our lives, if thou wilt but be true to us. Run to the town ; to the nearest tavern, and tell the first soldier there, that a soldier here is sore beset, but armed, and his life to be saved if they will but run. Then to the bailiff. But first to the soldiers. Nay, not a word, but buss me, good lass, and fly ! men’s lives hang on thy heels.’

She kilted up her gown to run. He came round to the road with her ; saw her cross the road cringing with fear, then glide away, then turn into an erect shadow, then melt away in the storm.

And now he must get to Gerard. But how ? He had to run the gauntlet of the whole band. He asked himself, what was the worst thing they could do ? for he had learned in war that an enemy does, not what you hope he will do, but what you hope he will not do. ‘ Attack me as I enter the kitchen ! Then I must not give them time.’

Just as he drew near to the latch, a terrible thought crossed him. ‘ Suppose they had already dealt with Gerard. Why, then,’ thought he, ‘ nought is left but to kill, and be killed ; ’ and he strung his bow, and walked rapidly into the kitchen. There were seven hideous faces seated round the fire, and the landlord pouring them out neat brandy, blood’s forerunner in every age.

‘ What ? company ! ’ cried Denys, gaily : ‘ one

minute, my lads, and I'll be with you ;' and he snatched up a lighted candle off the table, opened the door that led to the staircase, and went up it hallooing. 'What, Gerard ! whither hast thou skulked to ?' There was no answer.

He hallooed louder, 'Gerard, where art thou ?'

After a moment in which Denys lived an hour of agony, a peevish half-inarticulate noise issued from the room at the head of the little stairs. Denys burst in, and there was Gerard asleep.

'Thank God !' he said, in a choking voice, then began to sing loud, untuneful ditties. Gerard put his fingers into his ears ; but presently he saw in Denys's face a horror that contrasted strangely with this sudden merriment.

'What ails thee ?' said he, sitting up and staring.

'Hush !' said Denys, and his hand spoke even more plainly than his lips. 'Listen to me.'

Denys then pointing significantly to the door, to show Gerard sharp ears were listening hard by, continued his song aloud, but under cover of it threw in short muttered syllables.

'(Our lives are in peril.)

'(Thieves.)

'(Thy doublet.)

'(Thy sword.)

'Aid.

'Coming.

'Put off time.' Then aloud.

'Well, now, wilt have t'other bottle ?—Say Nay.'

'No, not I.'

'But I tell thee, there are half a dozen jolly fellows.—Tired.'

‘Ay, but I am too wearied,’ said Gerard. ‘Go thou.’

‘Nay, nay!’ Then he went to the door and called out cheerfully, ‘Landlord, the young milk-sop will not rise. Give those honest fellows t’other bottle. I will pay for’t in the morning.’

He heard a brutal and fierce chuckle.

Having thus by observation made sure the kitchen door was shut, and the miscreants were not actually listening, he examined the chamber door closely: then quietly shut it, but did not bolt it: and went and inspected the window.

It was too small to get out of, and yet a thick bar of iron had been let in the stone to make it smaller; and, just as he made this chilling discovery, the outer door of the house was bolted with a loud clang.

Denys groaned ‘The beasts are in the shambles.’

But would the thieves attack them while they were awake? Probably not.

Not to throw away this their best chance, the poor souls now made a series of desperate efforts to converse, as if discussing ordinary matters; and by this means Gerard learned all that had passed, and that the girl was gone for aid.

‘Pray Heaven, she may not lose heart by the way,’ said Denys, sorrowfully.

And Denys begged Gerard’s forgiveness for bringing him out of his way for this.

Gerard forgave him.

‘I would fear them less, Gerard, but for one they call the Abbot. I picked him out at once. Taller than you, bigger than us both put together. Fights with an axe. Gerard, a man to lead a herd of deer

to battle. I shall kill that man to-night, or he will kill me. I think somehow 'tis he will kill me.'

'Saints forbid! Shoot him at the door! What avails his strength against your weapon?'

'I shall pick him out: but, if it comes to hand fighting, run swiftly under his guard, or you are a dead man. I tell thee neither of us may stand a blow of that axe: thou never sawest such a body of a man.'

Gerard was for bolting the door; but Denys with a sigh showed him that half the door-post turned outward on a hinge, and the great bolt was little more than a blind. 'I have forborne to bolt it,' said he, 'that they may think us the less suspicious.'

Near an hour rolled away thus. It seemed an age. Yet it was but a little hour: and the town was a league distant. And some of the voices in the kitchen became angry and impatient.

'They will not wait much longer,' said Denys, 'and we have no chance at all unless we surprise them.'

'I will do whate'er you bid,' said Gerard meekly.

There was a cupboard on the same side as the door; but between it and the window. It reached nearly to the ground, but not quite. Denys opened the cupboard door and placed Gerard on a chair behind it. 'If they run for the bed, strike at the napes of their necks! a sword cut there always kills or disables.' He then arranged the bolsters and their shoes in the bed so as to deceive a person peeping from a distance, and drew the short curtains at the head.

Meantime Gerard was on his knees. Denys looked round and saw him.

‘ Ah ! ’ said Denys, ‘ above all pray them to forgive me for bringing you into this guetapens ! ’

And now they grasped hands and looked in one another’s eyes ; oh, such a look ! Denys’s hand was cold, and Gerard’s warm.

They took their posts.

Denys blew out the candle.

‘ We must keep silence now. ’

But in the terrible tension of their nerves and very souls they found they could hear a whisper fainter than any man could catch at all outside that door. They could hear each other’s hearts thump at times.

‘ Good news ! ’ breathed Denys, listening at the door.

‘ They are casting lots. ’

‘ Pray that it may be the Abbot. ’

‘ Yes. Why ? ’

‘ If he comes alone I can make sure of him. ’

‘ Denys ! ’

‘ Ay ! ’

‘ I fear I shall go mad, if they do not come soon. ’

‘ Shall I feign sleep ? Shall I snore ? ’

‘ Will that—— ? ’

‘ Perhaps. ’

‘ Do then, and God have mercy on us ! ’

Denys snored at intervals.

There was a scuffling of feet heard in the kitchen, and then all was still.

Denys snored again. Then took up his position behind the door.

But he, or they, who had drawn the lot, seemed

determined to run no foolish risks. Nothing was attempted in a hurry.

When they were almost starved with cold, and waiting for the attack, the door on the stairs opened softly and closed again. Nothing more.

There was another harrowing silence.

Then a single light footstep on the stair ; and nothing more.

Then a light crept under the door : and nothing more.

Presently there was a gentle scratching, not half so loud as a mouse's, and the false door-post opened by degrees and left a perpendicular space, through which the light streamed in. The door, had it been bolted, would now have hung by the bare tip of the bolt, which went into the real door-post, but, as it was, it swung gently open of itself. It opened inwards, so Denys did not raise his cross-bow from the ground, but merely grasped his dagger.

The candle was held up, and shaded from behind by a man's hand.

He was inspecting the beds from the threshold, satisfied that his victims were both in bed.

The man glided into the apartment. But at the first step something in the position of the cupboard and chair made him uneasy. He ventured no further, but put the candle on the floor and stooped to peer under the chair ; but, as he stooped, an iron hand grasped his shoulder, and a dagger was driven so fiercely through his neck that the point came out at his gullet. There was a terrible hiccough, but no cry ; and half a dozen silent strokes followed in swift succession, each a death-blow, and the assassin was laid noiselessly on the floor.

Denys closed the door ; bolted it gently ; drew the post to, and even while he was doing it whispered Gerard to bring a chair. It was done.

‘ Help me set him up.’

‘ Dead ? ’

‘ Parbleu.’

‘ What for ? ’

‘ Frighten them ! Gain time.

Even while saying this, Denys had whipped a piece of string round the dead man’s neck, and tied him to the chair, and there the ghastly figure sat fronting the door.

‘ Denys, I can do better. Saints forgive me ! ’

‘ What ? Be quick then, we have not many moments.’

And Denys got his cross-bow ready, and, tearing off his straw mattress, reared it before him and prepared to shoot the moment the door should open, for he had no hope any more would come singly, when they found the first did not return.

While thus employed, Gerard was busy about the seated corpse, and, to his amazement, Denys saw a luminous glow spreading rapidly over the white face.

Gerard blew out the candle. And on this the corpse’s face shone still more like a glow-worm’s head.

Denys shook in his shoes, and his teeth chattered.

‘ What in Heaven’s name is this ? ’ he whispered.

‘ Hush ! ’tis but phosphorus. But ’twill serve.’

‘ Away ! they will surprise thee.’

In fact uneasy mutterings were heard below, and at last a deep voice said, ‘ What makes him so long ? is the drôle rifling them ? ’

It was their comrade they suspected then, not the enemy. Soon a step came softly but rapidly up the stairs : the door was gently tried.

When this resisted, which was clearly not expected, the sham post was very cautiously moved, and an eye no doubt peeped through the aperture : for there was a howl of dismay, and the man was heard to stumble back and burst into the kitchen, where a Babel of voices rose directly on his return.

Gerard ran to the dead thief and began to work on him again.

‘ Back, madman ! ’ whispered Denys.

‘ Nay, nay. I know these ignorant brutes. They will not venture here awhile. I can make him ten times more fearful.’

‘ At least close that opening ! Let them not see you at your devilish work.’

Gerard closed the sham post, and in half a minute his brush made the dead head a sight to strike any man with dismay. He put his art to a strange use, and one unparalleled perhaps in the history of mankind. He illuminated his dead enemy’s face to frighten his living foe : the staring eyeballs he made globes of fire ; the teeth he left white, for so they were more terrible by the contrast, but the palate and tongue he tipped with fire, and made one lurid cavern of the red depths the chap-fallen jaw revealed : and on the brow he wrote in burning letters ‘ **La Mort** ’. And while he was doing it, the stout Denys was quaking, and fearing the vengeance of Heaven ; for one man’s courage is not another’s ; and the band of miscreants below were quarrelling and disputing loudly, and now without disguise.

The steps that led down to the kitchen were

fifteen, but they were nearly perpendicular : there was therefore in point of fact no distance between the besiegers and besieged, and the latter now caught almost every word. At last one was heard to cry out, ' I tell ye the devil has got him and branded him with hell-fire. I am more like to leave this cursed house than go again into a room that is full of fiends.'

' Art drunk ? or mad ? or a coward ? ' said another.

' Call me a coward, I'll give thee my dagger's point, and send thee where Pierre sits o' fire for ever.'

' Come, no quarrelling when work is afoot,' roared a tremendous diapason, ' or I'll brain ye both with my fist, and send ye where we shall all go soon or late.'

' The Abbot,' whispered Denys, gravely.

He felt the voice he had just heard could belong to no man but the colossus he had seen in passing through the kitchen. It made the place vibrate. The quarrelling continued some time, and then there was a dead silence.

' Look out, Gerard.'

' Ay. What will they do next ? '

' We shall soon know.'

' Shall I wait for you, or cut down the first that opens the door ? '

' Wait for me, lest we strike the same and waste a blow. Alas ! we cannot afford that.'

Dead silence.

Sudden came into the room a thing that made them start and their hearts quiver.

And what was it? A moonbeam.

Even so can this machine, the body, by the soul's action be strung up to start and quiver. The sudden ray shot keen and pure into that shamble.

Its calm, cold, silvery soul traversed the apartment in a stream of no great volume; for the window was narrow.

After the first tremor Gerard whispered, 'Courage, Denys! God's eye is on us even here.' And he fell upon his knees with his face turned towards the window.

Ay, it was like a holy eye opening suddenly on human crime and human passions. Many a scene of blood and crime that pure cold eye has rested on; but on few more ghastly than this, where two men, with a lighted corpse between them, waited panting, to kill and be killed. Nor did the moonlight deaden that horrible corpse-light. If anything it added to its ghastliness: for the body sat at the edge of the moonbeam, which cut sharp across the shoulder and the ear, and seemed blue and ghastly and unnatural by the side of that lurid glow in which the face and eyes and teeth shone horribly. But Denys dared not look that way.

The moon drew a broad stripe of light across the door, and on that his eyes were glued. Presently he whispered, 'Gerard!'

Gerard looked and raised his sword.

Acutely as they had listened they had heard of late no sound on the stair. Yet there—on the door-post, at the edge of the stream of moonlight, were the tips of the fingers of a hand.

The nails glistened.

Presently they began to crawl, and crawl, down towards the bolt, but with infinite slowness and caution. In so doing they crept into the moonlight. The actual motion was imperceptible, but slowly, slowly, the fingers came out whiter and whiter; but the hand between the main knuckles and the wrist remained dark. Denys slowly raised his cross-bow.

He levelled it. He took a long steady aim.

Gerard palpitated. At last the cross-bow twanged. The hand was instantly nailed, with a stern jar, to the quivering door-post. There was a scream of anguish. 'Cut,' whispered Denys eagerly, and Gerard's uplifted sword descended and severed the wrist with two swift blows. A body sank down moaning outside.

The hand remained inside, immovable, with blood trickling from it down the wall. The fierce bolt slightly barbed had gone through it and deep into the real door-post.

'Two,' said Denys, with terrible cynicism.

He strung his cross-bow, and kneeled behind his cover again.

'The next will be the Abbot.'

The wounded man moved, and presently crawled down to his companions on the stairs, and the kitchen door was shut.

There nothing was heard now but low muttering. The last incident had revealed the mortal character of the weapons used by the besieged.

'I begin to think the Abbot's stomach is not so great as his body,' said Denys.

The words were scarcely out of his mouth, when the following events happened all in a couple of seconds. The kitchen door was opened roughly,

a heavy but active man darted up the stairs without any manner of disguise, and a single ponderous blow sent the door not only off its hinges, but right across the room on to Denys's fortification, which it struck so rudely as nearly to lay him flat. And in the doorway stood a colossus with a glittering axe.

He saw the dead man with the moon's blue light on half his face, and the red light on the other half and inside his chap-fallen jaws : he stared, his arms fell, his knees knocked together, and he crouched with terror.

'LA MORT !' he cried in tones of terror, and turned and fled. In which act Denys started up and shot him through both jaws. He sprang with one bound into the kitchen, and there leaned on his axe, spitting blood and teeth and curses.

Denys strung his bow and put his hand into his breast.

He drew it out dismayed.

'My last bolt is gone,' he groaned.

'But we have our swords, and you have slain the giant.'

'No, Gerard,' said Denys, gravely : 'I have not. And the worst is I have wounded him. Fool ! to shoot at a retreating lion. He had never faced thy handiwork again, but for my meddling.'

'Ha ! to your guard ! I hear them open the door.'

Then Denys, depressed by the one error he had committed in all this fearful night, felt convinced his last hour had come. He drew his sword, but like one doomed. But what is this ? a red light flickers on the ceiling. Gerard flew to the window and looked out. There were men with torches, and

breastplates gleaming red. 'We are saved! Armed men!' And he dashed his sword through the window shouting, 'Quick! quick! we are sore pressed.'

'Back!' yelled Denys; 'they come! strike none but him!'

That very moment the Abbot and two men with naked weapons rushed into the room. Even as they came, the outer door was hammered fiercely, and the Abbot's comrades hearing it, and seeing the torchlight, turned and fled. Not so the terrible Abbot: wild with rage and pain, he spurned his dead comrade, chair and all, across the room, then, as the men faced him on each side with kindling eyeballs, he waved his tremendous axe like a feather right and left, and cleared a space, then lifted it to hew them both in pieces.

His antagonists were inferior in strength, but not in swiftness and daring, and above all they had settled how to attack him. The moment he reared his axe, they flew at him like cats, and both together. If he struck a full blow with his weapon he would most likely kill one, but the other would certainly kill him: he saw this, and intelligent as well as powerful, he thrust the handle fiercely in Denys's face, and, turning, jobbed with the steel at Gerard. Denys went staggering back covered with blood. Gerard had rushed in like lightning, and, just as the axe turned to descend on him, drove his sword so fiercely through the giant's body, that the very hilt sounded on his ribs like the blow of a pugilist, and Denys, staggering back to help his friend, saw a steel point come out of the Abbot behind.

The stricken giant bellowed like a bull, dropped his axe, and clutching Gerard's throat tremen-

dously, shook him like a child. Then Denys with a fierce snarl drove his sword into the giant's back. 'Stand firm now!' and he pushed the cold steel through and through the giant and out at his breast.

Thus horribly spitted on both sides, the Abbot gave a violent shudder, and his heels hammered the ground convulsively. His lips, fast turning blue, opened wide and deep, and he cried 'LA MORT!—LA MORT!—LA MORT!!' The first time in a roar of despair, and then twice in a horror-stricken whisper never to be forgotten.

Just then the street door was forced.

Suddenly the Abbot's arms whirled like windmills, and his huge body wrenched wildly and carried them to the doorway, twisting their wrists and nearly throwing them off their legs.

'He'll win clear yet,' cried Denys: 'out steel! and in again!'

They tore out their smoking swords, but, ere they could stab again, the Abbot leaped full five feet high, and fell with a tremendous crash against the door below, carrying it away with him like a sheet of paper, and through the aperture the glare of torches burst on the awe-struck faces above, half blinding them.

The thieves at the first alarm had made for the back door, but driven thence by a strong guard ran back to the kitchen, just in time to see the lock forced out of the socket, and half a dozen mailed archers burst in upon them. On these in pure despair they drew their swords.

But ere a blow was struck on either side, the staircase door behind them was battered into their

midst with one ponderous blow, and with it the Abbot's body came flying, hurled, as they thought, by no mortal hand, and rolled on the floor spouting blood from back and bosom in two furious jets, and quivered, but breathed no more.

The thieves smitten with dismay fell on their knees directly, and the archers bound them, while, above, the rescued ones still stood like statues rooted to the spot, their dripping swords extended in the red torchlight, expecting their indomitable enemy to leap back on them as wonderfully as he had gone.—*The Cloister and the Hearth.*

### A FIGHT WITH SMUGGLERS

‘*January 18.*—In the midst of life we are in death. Oh ! dear Margaret, I thought I had lost thee. Here I lie in pain and dole, and shall write thee that, which read you it in a romance ye should cry, “Most improbable !” And so still wondering that I am alive to write it, and thanking for it God and the saints, this is what befell thy Gerard. Yestreen I wearied of being shut up in litter, and of the mule's slow pace, and so went forward ; and being, I know not why, strangely full of spirit and hope, as I have heard befall some men when on trouble's brink, seemed to tread on air, and soon distanced them all. Presently I came to two roads, and took the larger ; I should have taken the smaller. After travelling a good half-hour, I found my error, and returned ; and deeming my company had long passed by, pushed bravely on, but I could not overtake them ; and small wonder, as you shall hear. Then I was anxious, and ran, but bare was the road of those I sought ; and night came

down, and the wild beasts afoot, and I bemoaned my folly ; also I was hungered. The moon rose clear and bright exceedingly, and presently, a little way off the road, I saw a tall wind-mill. "Come," said I, "mayhap the miller will take ruth on me." Near the mill was a haystack, and scattered about were store of little barrels ; but, lo ! they were not flour-barrels, but tar-barrels, one or two, and the rest of spirits, Brant vein and Schiedam ; I knew them momentarily, having seen the like in Holland. I knocked at the mill door, but none answered. I lifted the latch, and the door opened inwards. I went in, and gladly, for the night was fine but cold, and a rime on the trees, which were a kind of lofty sycamores. There was a stove, but black ; I lighted it with some of the hay and wood, for there was a great pile of wood outside ; and I know not how, I went to sleep. Not long had I slept, I trow, when hearing a noise I awoke, and there were a dozen men around me, with wild faces, and long black hair, and black sparkling eyes.'

*Catherine.*] 'Oh, my poor boy ! those black-haired ones do still scare me to look on.'

'I made my excuses in such Italian as I knew, and eking out by signs. They grinned. "I had lost my company." They grinned. "I was an hungered." Still they grinned, and spoke to one another in a tongue I knew not. At last one gave me a piece of bread and a tin mug of wine, as I thought, but it was spirits neat. I made a wry face, and asked for water : then these wild men laughed a horrible laugh. I thought to fly, but, looking towards the door, it was bolted with two enormous bolts of iron, and now first, as I ate my

bread, I saw it was all guarded too, and ribbed with iron. My blood curdled within me, and yet I could not tell thee why; but hadst thou seen the faces, wild, stupid, and ruthless. I mumbled my bread, not to let them see I feared them; but oh, it cost me to swallow it and keep it in me. Then it whirled in my brain, was there no way to escape? Said I, "They will not let me forth by the door; these be smugglers or robbers." So I feigned drowsiness, and taking out two batzen said, "Good men, for our Lady's grace let me lie on a bed and sleep, for I am faint with travel." They nodded and grinned their horrible grin, and bade one light a lanthorn and lead me. He took me up a winding staircase, up, up, and I saw no windows, but the wooden walls were pierced like a barbican tower, and methinks for the same purpose, and through these slits I got glimpses of the sky, and thought, "Shall I e'er see thee again?" He took me to the very top of the mill, and there was a room with a heap of straw in one corner, and many empty barrels, and by the wall a truckle bed. He pointed to it, and went down stairs heavily, taking the light, for in this room was a great window, and the moon came in bright. I looked out to see, and lo it was so high that even the mill sails at their highest came not up to my window by some feet, but turned very slow and stately underneath, for wind there was scarce a breath: and the trees seemed silver filagree made by angel craftsmen. My hope of flight was gone.

'But now, those wild faces being out of sight, I smiled at my fears: what an' if they were ill men, would it profit them to hurt me? Natheless, for caution against surprise, I would put the bed

against the door. I went to move it, but could not. It was free at the head, but at the foot fast clamped with iron to the floor. So I flung my psaltery on the bed, but for myself made a layer of straw at the door, so as none could open on me unawares. And I laid my sword ready to my hand. And said my prayers for thee and me, and turned to sleep.

‘Below they drank and made merry. And hearing this gave me confidence. Said I, “Out of sight, out of mind. Another hour and the good Schiedam will make them forget that I am here.” And so I composed myself to sleep. And for some time could not for the boisterous mirth below. At last I dropped off. How long I slept I knew not; but I woke with a start: the noise had ceased below, and the sudden silence woke me. And scarce was I awake, when sudden the truckle bed was gone with a loud clang all but the feet, and the floor yawned, and I heard my psaltery fall and break to atoms, deep, deep, below the very floor of the mill. It had fallen into a well. And so had I done, lying where it lay.’

Margaret shuddered and put her face in her hands. But speedily resumed.

‘I lay stupefied at first. Then horror fell on me and I rose, but stood rooted there, shaking from head to foot. At last I found myself looking down into that fearsome gap, and my very hair did bristle as I peered. And then, I remember, I turned quite calm, and made up my mind to die sword in hand. For I saw no man must know this their bloody secret and live. And I said “Poor Margaret!” And I took out of my bosom, where they lie ever, our marriage lines, and kissed

them again and again. And I pinned them to my shirt again, that they might lie in one grave with me, if die I must. And I thought "All our love and hopes to end thus!"

*Eli.*] 'Whist all! Their marriage lines? Give her time! But no word. I can bear no chat. My poor lad!'

During the long pause that ensued Catherine leaned forward and passed something adroitly from her own lap under her daughter's apron who sat next her.

'Presently thinking, all in a whirl, of all that ever passed between us, and taking leave of all those pleasant hours, I called to mind how one day at Sevenbergen thou taughtest me to make a rope of straw. Mindest thou? The moment memory brought that happy day back to me, I cried out very loud: "Margaret gives me a chance for life even here." I woke from my lethargy. I seized on the straw and twisted it eagerly, as thou didst teach me, but my fingers trembled and delayed the task. Whiles I wrought I heard a door open below. That was a terrible moment. Even as I twisted my rope I got to the window and looked down at the great arms of the mill coming slowly up, then passing, then turning less slowly down, as it seemed; and I thought "They go not as when there is wind: yet, slow or fast, what man rid ever on such steed as these, and lived? Yet," said I, "better trust to them and God, than to ill men." And I prayed to Him whom even the wind obeyeth.

'Dear Margaret, I fastened my rope, and let myself gently down, and fixed my eye on that huge arm of the mill, which then was creeping up

to me, and went to spring on to it. But my heart failed me at the pinch. And methought it was not near enow. And it passed calm and awful by. I watched for another; they were three. And after a little while one crept up slower than the rest methought. And I with my foot thrust myself in good time somewhat out from the wall, and crying aloud "Margaret!" did grip with all my soul the wood work of the sail, and that moment was swimming in the air.'

*Giles.*] 'Well done! well done!'

'Motion I felt little; but the stars seemed to go round the sky, and then the grass came up to me nearer and nearer, and when the hoary grass was quite close I was sent rolling along it as if hurled from a catapult, and got up breathless, and every point and tie about me broken. I rose, but fell down again in agony. I had but one leg I could stand on.'

*Catherine.*] 'Eh! dear! his leg is broke, my boy's leg is broke.'

'And, e'en as I lay groaning, I heard a sound like thunder. It was the assassins running up the stairs. The crazy old mill shook under them. They must have found I had not fallen into their bloody trap, and were running to despatch me. Margaret, I felt no fear, for I had now no hope. I could neither run, nor hide; so wild the place, so bright the moon. I struggled up all agony and revenge, more like some wounded wild beast than your Gerard. Leaning on my sword hilt I hobbled round; and swift as lightning, or vengeance, I heaped a great pile of their hay and wood at the mill door; then drove my dagger into a barrel of their smuggled spirits, and flung it on; then out

with my tinder and lighted the pile. "This will bring true men round my dead body," said I. "Aha!" I cried, "think you I'll die alone, cowards, assassins! reckless fiends!" and at each word on went a barrel pierced. But, oh, Margaret! the fire fed by the spirits surprised me: it shot up and singed my very hair, it went roaring up the side of the mill, swift as falls the lightning: and I yelled and laughed in my torture and despair, and pierced more barrels, and the very tar-barrels, and flung them on. The fire roared like a lion for its prey, and voices answered it inside from the top of the mill, and the feet came thundering down, and I stood as near that awful fire as I could, with uplifted sword to slay and be slain. The bolt was drawn. A tar-barrel caught fire. The door was opened. What followed? Not the men came out, but the fire rushed in at them like a living death, and the first I thought to fight with was blackened and crumpled on the floor like a leaf. One fearsome yell, and dumb for ever. The feet ran up again, but fewer. I heard them hack with their swords a little way up, at the mill's wooden sides; but they had no time to hew their way out: the fire and reek were at their heels, and the smoke burst out at every loophole, and oozed blue in the moonlight through each crevice. I hobbled back, racked with pain and fury. There were white faces up at my window. They saw me. They cursed me. I cursed them back and shook my naked sword: "Come down the road I came," I cried. "But ye must come one by one, and, as ye come, ye die upon this steel." Some cursed at that, but others wailed. For I had them all at deadly vantage. And doubtless with my smoke-

grimed face and fiendish rage I looked a demon. And now there was a steady roar inside the mill. The flame was going up it as furnace up its chimney. The mill caught fire. Fire glimmered through it. Tongues of flame darted through each loophole and shot sparks and fiery flakes into the night. One of the assassins leaped on to the sail, as I had done. In his hurry he missed his grasp and fell at my feet, and bounded from the hard ground like a ball, and never spoke, nor moved again. And the rest screamed like women, and with their despair came back to me both ruth for them and hope of life for myself. And the fire gnawed through the mill in places, and shot forth showers of great flat sparks like flakes of fiery snow; and the sails caught fire one after another; and I became a man again and staggered away terror-stricken, leaning on my sword, from the sight of my revenge, and with great bodily pain crawled back to the road. And, dear Margaret, the rimy trees were now all like pyramids of golden filagree, and lace, cobweb fine, in the red firelight. Oh! most beautiful! And a poor wretch got entangled in the burning sails, and whirled round screaming, and lost hold at the wrong time, and hurled like stone from mangonel high into the air; then a dull thump; it was his carcass striking the earth. The next moment there was a loud crash. The mill fell in on its destroyer, and a million great sparks flew up, and the sails fell over the burning wreck, and at that a million more sparks flew up, and the ground was strewn with burning wood and men. I prayed God forgive me, and kneeling with my back to that fiery shambles, I saw lights on the road; a welcome sight. It was a company

coming towards me, and scarce two furlongs off. I hobbled towards them. Ere I had gone far I heard a swift step behind me. I turned. One had escaped; how escaped, who can divine? His sword shone in the moonlight. I feared him, methought the ghosts of all those dead sat on that glittering glaive. I put my other foot to the ground, maugre the anguish, and fled towards the torches, moaning with pain, and shouting for aid. But what could I do? He gained on me. Behooved me turn and fight. Denys had taught me sword play in sport. I wheeled, our swords clashed. His clothes they smelled all singed. I cut swiftly upward with supple hand, and his dangled bleeding at the wrist, and his sword fell; it tinkled on the ground. I raised my sword to hew him should he stoop for't. He stood and cursed me. He drew his dagger with his left. I opposed my point and dared him with my eye to close. A great shout arose behind me from true men's throats. He started. He spat at me in his rage, then gnashed his teeth and fled blaspheming. I turned and saw torches close at hand. Lo, they fell to dancing up and down methought, and the next—moment—all—was—dark. I had—*ah!*'

*Catherine.*] 'Here, help! water! Stand aloof, you that be men!'

Margaret had fainted away.—*The Cloister and the Hearth.*

## ANTHONY TROLLOPE

1815-82

ARCHDEACON GRANTLY'S BREAKFAST  
TABLE

AND now let us observe the well-furnished breakfast-parlour at Plumstead Episcopi, and the comfortable air of all the belongings of the rectory. Comfortable they certainly were, but neither gorgeous nor even grand; indeed, considering the money that had been spent there, the eye and taste might have been better served; there was an air of heaviness about the rooms which might have been avoided without any sacrifice of propriety; colours might have been better chosen and lights more perfectly diffused: but perhaps in doing so the thorough clerical aspect of the whole might have been somewhat marred; at any rate, it was not without ample consideration that those thick, dark, costly carpets were put down; those embossed but sombre papers hung up; those heavy curtains draped so as to half-exclude the light of the sun: nor were these old-fashioned chairs, bought at a price far exceeding that now given for more modern goods, without a purpose. The breakfast-service on the table was equally costly and equally plain; the apparent object had been to spend money without obtaining brilliancy or splendour. The urn was of thick and solid silver, as were also the tea-pot, coffee-pot, cream-ewer, and sugar-bowl; the cups were old, dim dragon china, worth about a pound a piece but very despicable in the eyes of the uninitiated. The silver forks were so heavy as to be disagreeable

to the hand, and the bread-basket was of a weight really formidable to any but robust persons. The tea consumed was the very best, the coffee the very blackest, the cream the very thickest; there was dry toast and buttered toast, muffins and crumpets; hot bread and cold bread, white bread and brown bread, home-made bread and baker's bread, wheaten bread and oaten bread, and if there be other breads than these they were there; there were eggs in napkins, and crispy bits of bacon under silver covers; and there were little fishes in a little box, and devilled kidneys frizzling on a hot-water dish; which, by the by, were placed closely contiguous to the plate of the worthy archdeacon himself. Over and above this, on a snow-white napkin, spread upon the sideboard, was a huge ham and a huge sirloin; the latter having laden the dinner table on the previous evening. Such was the ordinary fare at Plumstead Episcopi.—*The Warden.*

#### DR. PROUDIE'S CHAPLAIN

OF the Rev. Mr. Slope's parentage I am not able to say much. I have heard it asserted that he is lineally descended from that eminent physician who assisted at the birth of Mr. T. Shandy, and that in early years he added an 'e' to his name, for the sake of euphony, as other great men have done before him. If this be so, I presume he was christened Obadiah, for that is his name, in commemoration of the conflict in which his ancestor so distinguished himself. All my researches on the subject have, however, failed in enabling me to fix the date on which the family changed its religion.

He had been a sizar at Cambridge, and had there conducted himself at any rate successfully, for in due process of time he was an M.A., having university pupils under his care. From thence he was transferred to London, and became preacher at a new district church built on the confines of Baker Street. He was in this position when congenial ideas on religious subjects recommended him to Mrs. Proudie, and the intercourse had become close and confidential.

Having been thus familiarly thrown among the Misses Proudie, it was no more than natural that some softer feeling than friendship should be engendered. There have been some passages of love between him and the eldest hope, Olivia; but they have hitherto resulted in no favourable arrangement. In truth, Mr. Slope having made a declaration of affection, afterwards withdrew it on finding that the doctor had no immediate worldly funds with which to endow his child; and it may easily be conceived that Miss Proudie, after such an announcement on his part, was not readily disposed to receive any further show of affection. On the appointment of Dr. Proudie to the bishopric of Barchester, Mr. Slope's views were in truth somewhat altered. Bishops, even though they be poor, can provide for clerical children, and Mr. Slope began to regret that he had not been more disinterested. He no sooner heard the tidings of the doctor's elevation, than he recommenced his siege, not violently, indeed, but respectfully, and at a distance. Olivia Proudie, however, was a girl of spirit: she had the blood of two peers in her veins, and, better still, she had another lover on her books; so Mr. Slope sighed in vain;

and the pair soon found it convenient to establish a mutual bond of inveterate hatred.

It may be thought singular that Mrs. Proudie's friendship for the young clergyman should remain firm after such an affair ; but to tell the truth, she had known nothing of it. Though very fond of Mr. Slope herself, she had never conceived the idea that either of her daughters would become so, and remembering their high birth and social advantages, expected for them matches of a different sort. Neither the gentleman nor the lady found it necessary to enlighten her. Olivia's two sisters had each known of the affair, so had all the servants, so had all the people living in the adjoining houses on either side ; but Mrs. Proudie had been kept in the dark.

Mr. Slope soon comforted himself with the reflection, that as he had been selected as chaplain to the bishop, it would probably be in his power to get the good things in the bishop's gift, without troubling himself with the bishop's daughter ; and he found himself able to endure the pangs of rejected love. As he sat himself down in the railway carriage, confronting the bishop and Mrs. Proudie, as they started on their first journey to Barchester, he began to form in his own mind a plan of his future life. He knew well his patron's strong points, but he knew the weak ones as well. He understood correctly enough to what attempts the new bishop's high spirit would soar, and he rightly guessed that public life would better suit the great man's taste, than the small details of diocesan duty.

He, therefore, he, Mr. Slope, would in effect be bishop of Barchester. Such was his resolve ; and

to give Mr. Slope his due, he had both courage and spirit to bear him out in his resolution. He knew that he should have a hard battle to fight, for the power and patronage of the see would be equally coveted by another great mind—Mrs. Proudie would also choose to be bishop of Barchester. Mr. Slope, however, flattered himself that he could out-manceuvre the lady. She must live much in London, while he would always be on the spot. She would necessarily remain ignorant of much, while he would know everything belonging to the diocese. At first, doubtless, he must flatter and cajole, perhaps yield, in some things ; but he did not doubt of ultimate triumph. If all other means failed, he could join the bishop against his wife, inspire courage into the unhappy man, lay an axe to the root of the woman's power, and emancipate the husband.—*Barchester Towers*.

#### ARCHDEACON GRANTLY AND MR. HARDING, THE PRECENTOR, VISIT DR. PROUDIE

OUR friends found Dr. Proudie sitting on the old bishop's chair, looking very nice in his new apron ; they found, too, Mr. Slope standing on the hearthrug, persuasive and eager, just as the archdeacon used to stand ; but on the sofa they also found Mrs. Proudie, an innovation for which a precedent might in vain be sought in all the annals of the Barchester bishopric !

There she was, however, and they could only make the best of her. The introductions were gone through in much form. The archdeacon shook hands with the bishop, and named Mr. Harding, who received such an amount of greeting as was

due from a bishop to a precentor. His lordship then presented them to his lady wife; the archdeacon first, with archidiaconal honours, and then the precentor with diminished parade. After this Mr. Slope presented himself. The bishop, it is true, did mention his name, and so did Mrs. Proudie too, in a louder tone; but Mr. Slope took upon himself the chief burden of his own introduction. He had great pleasure in making himself acquainted with Dr. Grantly; he had heard much of the archdeacon's good works in that part of the diocese in which his duties as archdeacon had been exercised (thus purposely ignoring the archdeacon's hitherto unlimited dominion over the diocese at large). He was aware that his lordship depended greatly on the assistance which Dr. Grantly would be able to give him in that portion of his diocese. He then thrust out his hand, and grasping that of his new foe, bedewed it unmercifully. Dr. Grantly in return bowed, looked stiff, contracted his eyebrows, and wiped his hand with his pocket-handkerchief. Nothing abashed, Mr. Slope then noticed the precentor, and descended to the grade of the lower clergy. He gave him a squeeze of the hand, damp indeed, but affectionate, and was very glad to make the acquaintance of Mr. —; oh yes, Mr. Harding; he had not exactly caught the name—'Precentor in the cathedral,'—surmised Mr. Slope. Mr. Harding confessed that such was the humble sphere of his work. 'Some parish duty as well,' suggested Mr. Slope. Mr. Harding acknowledged the diminutive incumbency of St. Cuthbert's. Mr. Slope then left him alone, having condescended sufficiently, and joined the conversation among the higher powers.

There were four persons there, each of whom considered himself the most important personage in the diocese; himself, indeed, or herself, as Mrs. Proudie was one of them; and with such a difference of opinion it was not probable that they would get on pleasantly together. The bishop himself actually wore the visible apron, and trusted mainly to that—to that and his title, both being facts which could not be overlooked. The archdeacon knew his subject, and really understood the business of bishoping, which the others did not; and this was his strong ground. Mrs. Proudie had her sex to back her, and her habit of command, and was nothing daunted by the high tone of Dr. Grantly's face and figure. Mr. Slope had only himself and his own courage and tact to depend on, but he nevertheless was perfectly self-assured, and did not doubt but that he should soon get the better of weak men who trusted so much to externals, as both bishop and archdeacon appeared to do.

'Do you reside in Barchester, Dr. Grantly?' asked the lady with her sweetest smile.

Dr. Grantly explained that he lived in his own parish of Plumstead Episcopi, a few miles out of the city. Whereupon the lady hoped that the distance was not too great for country visiting, as she would be so glad to make the acquaintance of Mrs. Grantly. She would take the earliest opportunity, after the arrival of her horses at Barchester; their horses were at present in London; their horses were not immediately coming down, as the bishop would be obliged, in a few days, to return to town. Dr. Grantly was no doubt aware that the bishop was at present

much called upon by the 'University Improvement Committee': indeed, the Committee could not well proceed without him, as their final report had now to be drawn up. The bishop had also to prepare a scheme for the 'Manufacturing Towns Morning and Evening Sunday School Society', of which he was a patron, or president, or director, and therefore the horses would not come down to Barchester at present; but whenever the horses did come down, she would take the earliest opportunity of calling at Plumstead Episcopi, providing the distance was not too great for country visiting.

The archdeacon made his fifth bow: he had made one at each mention of the horses; and promised that Mrs. Grantly would do herself the honour of calling at the palace on an early day. Mrs. Proudie declared that she would be delighted: she hadn't liked to ask, not being quite sure whether Mrs. Grantly had horses; besides, the distance might have been, &c., &c.

Dr. Grantly again bowed, but said nothing. He could have bought every individual possession of the whole family of the Proudies, and have restored them as a gift, without much feeling the loss; and had kept a separate pair of horses for the exclusive use of his wife since the day of his marriage; whereas Mrs. Proudie had been hitherto jobbed about the streets of London at so much a month during the season; and at other times had managed to walk, or hire a smart fly from the livery stables.

'Are the arrangements with reference to the Sabbath-day schools generally pretty good in your archdeaconry?' asked Mr. Slope.

'Sabbath-day schools!' repeated the arch-

deacon with an affectation of surprise. 'Upon my word, I can't tell; it depends mainly on the parson's wife and daughters. There is none at Plumstead.'

This was almost a fib on the part of the arch-deacon, for Mrs. Grantly has a very nice school. To be sure it is not a Sunday school exclusively, and is not so designated; but that exemplary lady always attends there an hour before church, and hears the children say their catechism, and sees that they are clean and tidy for church, with their hands washed, and their shoes tied; and Grisel and Florinda, her daughters, carry thither a basket of large buns, baked on the Saturday afternoon, and distribute them to all the children not especially under disgrace, which buns are carried home after church with considerable content, and eaten hot at tea, being then split and toasted. The children of Plumstead would indeed open their eyes if they heard their venerated pastor declare that there was no Sunday school in his parish.

Mr. Slope merely opened his eyes wider, and slightly shrugged his shoulders. He was not, however, prepared to give up his darling project.

'I feel there is a great deal of Sabbath travelling here,' said he. 'On looking at the *Bradshaw*, I see that there are three trains in and three out every Sabbath. Could nothing be done to induce the company to withdraw them? Don't you think, Dr. Grantly, that a little energy might diminish the evil?'

'Not being a director, I really can't say. But if you can withdraw the passengers, the company, I dare say, will withdraw the trains,' said the doctor. 'It's merely a question of dividends.'

‘But surely, Dr. Grantly,’ said the lady, ‘surely we should look at it differently. You and I, for instance, in our position: surely we should do all that we can to control so grievous a sin. Don’t you think so, Mr. Harding?’ and she turned to the precentor, who was sitting mute and unhappy.

Mr. Harding thought that all porters and stokers, guards, breaksmen, and pointsmen ought to have an opportunity of going to church, and he hoped that they all had.

‘But surely, surely,’ continued Mrs. Proudie, ‘surely that is not enough. Surely that will not secure such an observance of the Sabbath as we are taught to conceive is not only expedient but indispensable; surely——’

Come what come might, Dr. Grantly was not to be forced into a dissertation on a point of doctrine with Mrs. Proudie, nor yet with Mr. Slope; so without much ceremony he turned his back upon the sofa, and began to hope that Dr. Proudie had found that the palace repairs had been such as to meet his wishes.

‘Yes, yes,’ said his lordship; upon the whole he thought so—upon the whole, he didn’t know that there was much ground for complaint; the architect, perhaps, might have—— but his double, Mr. Slope, who had sidled over to the bishop’s chair, would not allow his lordship to finish his ambiguous speech.

‘There is one point I would like to mention, Mr. Archdeacon. His lordship asked me to step through the premises, and I see that the stalls in the second stable are not perfect.’

‘Why—there’s standing there for a dozen horses,’ said the archdeacon.

‘Perhaps so,’ said the other; ‘indeed, I’ve no doubt of it; but visitors, you know, often require so much accommodation. There are so many of the bishop’s relatives who always bring their own horses.’

Dr. Grantly promised that due provision for the relatives’ horses should be made, as far at least as the extent of the original stable building would allow. He would himself communicate with the architect.

‘And the coach-house, Dr. Grantly,’ continued Mr. Slope; ‘there is really hardly room for a second carriage in the large coach-house, and the smaller one, of course, holds only one.’

‘And the gas,’ chimed in the lady; ‘there is no gas through the house, none whatever, but in the kitchen and passages. Surely the palace should have been fitted through with pipes for gas, and hot water too. There is no hot water laid on anywhere above the ground-floor; surely there should be the means of getting hot water in the bedrooms without having it brought in jugs from the kitchen.’

The bishop had a decided opinion that there should be pipes for hot water. Hot water was very essential for the comfort of the palace. It was, indeed, a requisite in any decent gentleman’s house.

Mr. Slope had remarked that the coping on the garden wall was in many places imperfect.

Mrs. Proudie had discovered a large hole, evidently the work of rats, in the servants’ hall.

The bishop expressed an utter detestation of rats. There was nothing, he believed, in this world, that he so much hated as a rat.

Mr. Slope had, moreover, observed that the

locks of the out-houses were very imperfect : he might specify the coal-cellar, and the wood-house.

Mrs. Proudie had also seen that those on the doors of the servants' bedrooms were in an equally bad condition ; indeed the locks all through the house were old-fashioned and unserviceable.

The bishop thought that a great deal depended on a good lock, and quite as much on the key. He had observed that the fault very often lay with the key, especially if the wards were in any way twisted.

Mr. Slope was going on with his catalogue of grievances, when he was somewhat loudly interrupted by the archdeacon, who succeeded in explaining that the diocesan architect, or rather his foreman, was the person to be addressed on such subjects ; and that he, Dr. Grantly, had inquired as to the comfort of the palace, merely as a point of compliment. He was sorry, however, that so many things had been found amiss : and then he rose from his chair to escape.

Mrs. Proudie, though she had contrived to lend her assistance in recapitulating the palatial dilapidations, had not on that account given up her hold of Mr. Harding, nor ceased from her cross-examinations as to the iniquity of Sabbatical amusements. Over and over again had she thrown out her 'Surely, surely,' at Mr. Harding's devoted head, and ill had that gentleman been able to parry the attack.

He had never before found himself subjected to such a nuisance. Ladies, hitherto, when they had consulted him on religious subjects, had listened to what he might choose to say with some deference, and had differed, if they differed, in silence. But

Mrs. Proudie interrogated him, and then lectured. 'Neither thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, nor thy man servant, nor thy maid servant,' said she, impressively, and more than once, as though Mr. Harding had forgotten the words. She shook her finger at him as she quoted the favourite law, as though menacing him with punishment; and then called upon him categorically to state whether he did not think that travelling on the Sabbath was an abomination and a desecration.

Mr. Harding had never been so hard pressed in his life. He felt that he ought to rebuke the lady for presuming so to talk to a gentleman and a clergyman many years her senior; but he recoiled from the idea of scolding the bishop's wife, in the bishop's presence, on his first visit to the palace; moreover, to tell the truth, he was somewhat afraid of her. She, seeing him sit silent and absorbed, by no means refrained from the attack.

'I hope, Mr. Harding,' said she, shaking her head slowly and solemnly, 'I hope you will not leave me to think that you approve of Sabbath travelling,' and she looked a look of unutterable meaning into his eyes.

There was no standing this, for Mr. Slope was now looking at him, and so was the bishop, and so was the archdeacon, who had completed his adieux on that side of the room. Mr. Harding therefore got up also, and putting out his hand to Mrs. Proudie said: 'If you will come to St. Cuthbert's some Sunday, I will preach you a sermon on that subject.'

And so the archdeacon and the precentor took their departure, bowing low to the lady, shaking

hands with the lord, and escaping from Mr. Slope in the best manner each could. Mr. Harding was again maltreated ; but Dr. Grantly swore deeply in the bottom of his heart, that no earthly consideration should ever again induce him to touch the paw of that impure and filthy animal.

And now, had I the pen of a mighty poet, would I sing in epic verse the noble wrath of the archdeacon. The palace steps descend to a broad gravel sweep, from whence a small gate opens out into the street, very near the covered gateway leading into the close. The road from the palace door turns to the left, through the spacious gardens, and terminates on the London road, half a mile from the cathedral.

Till they had both passed this small gate and entered the close, neither of them spoke a word ; but the precentor clearly saw from his companion's face that a tornado was to be expected, nor was he himself inclined to stop it. Though by nature far less irritable than the archdeacon, even he was angry : he even—that mild and courteous man—was inclined to express himself in anything but courteous terms.

‘ Good heavens ! ’ exclaimed the archdeacon, as he placed his foot on the gravel walk of the close, and raising his hat with one hand, passed the other somewhat violently over his now grizzled locks ; smoke issued forth from the uplifted beaver as it were a cloud of wrath, and the safety-valve of his anger opened, and emitted a visible steam, preventing positive explosion and probable apoplexy. ‘ Good heavens ! ’—and the archdeacon looked up to the grey pinnacles of the cathedral tower, making a mute appeal to that still living

witness which had looked down on the doings of so many bishops of Barchester.

‘I don’t think I shall ever like that Mr. Slope,’ said Mr. Harding.

‘Like him!’ roared the archdeacon, standing still for a moment to give more force to his voice; ‘like him!’ All the ravens of the close cawed their assent. The old bells of the tower, in chiming the hour, echoed the words; and the swallows flying out from their nests mutely expressed a similar opinion. Like Mr. Slope! Why no, it was not very probable that any Barchester-bred living thing should like Mr. Slope!

‘Nor Mrs. Proudie either,’ said Mr. Harding.

The archdeacon hereupon forgot himself. I will not follow his example, nor shock my readers by transcribing the term in which he expressed his feeling as to the lady who had been named. The ravens and the last lingering notes of the clock bells were less scrupulous, and repeated in corresponding echoes the very improper exclamation. The archdeacon again raised his hat, and another salutary escape of steam was effected.—*Barchester Towers*.

#### MR. CRAWLEY’S INTERVIEW WITH DR. AND MRS. PROUDIE

WHO inquires why it is that a little greased flour rubbed in among the hair on a footman’s head,—just one dab here and another there,—gives such a tone of high life to the family? And seeing that the thing is so easily done, why do not more people attempt it? The tax on hair-powder is but thirteen shillings a year. It may, indeed, be that

the slightest dab in the world justifies the wearer in demanding hot meat three times a day, and wine at any rate on Sundays. I think, however, that a bishop's wife may enjoy the privilege without such heavy attendant expense ; otherwise the man who opened the bishop's door to Mr. Crawley would hardly have been so ornamented.

The man asked for a card. ' My name is Mr. Crawley,' said our friend. ' The bishop has desired me to come to him at this hour. Will you be pleased to tell him that I am here.' The man again asked for a card. ' I am not bound to carry with me my name printed on a ticket,' said Mr. Crawley. ' If you cannot remember it, give me pen and paper, and I will write it.' The servant, somewhat awed by the stranger's manner, brought the pen and paper, and Mr. Crawley wrote his name :—

‘ THE REV. JOSHUA CRAWLEY, M.A.,  
*Perpetual Curate of Hoggstock.*’

He was then ushered into a waiting-room, but, to his disappointment, was not kept there waiting long. Within three minutes he was ushered into the bishop's study, and into the presence of the two great luminaries of the diocese. He was at first somewhat disconcerted by finding Mrs. Proudie in the room. In the imaginary conversation with the bishop which he had been preparing on the road, he had conceived that the bishop would be attended by a chaplain, and he had suited his words to the joint discomfiture of the bishop and of the lower clergyman ;—but now the line of his battle must be altered. This was no doubt an injury, but he trusted to his courage and readiness

to enable him to surmount it. He had left his hat behind him in the waiting-room, but he kept his old short cloak still upon his shoulders ; and when he entered the bishop's room his hands and arms were hid beneath it. There was something lowly in this constrained gait. It showed at least that he had no idea of being asked to shake hands with the august persons he might meet. And his head was somewhat bowed, though his great, bald, broad forehead showed itself so prominent, that neither the bishop nor Mrs. Proudie could drop it from their sight during the whole interview. He was a man who when seen could hardly be forgotten. The deep angry remonstrant eyes, the shaggy eyebrows, telling tales of frequent anger,—of anger frequent but generally silent,—the repressed indignation of the habitual frown, the long nose and large powerful mouth, the deep furrows on the cheek, and the general look of thought and suffering, all combined to make the appearance of the man remarkable, and to describe to the beholders at once his true character. No one ever on seeing Mr. Crawley took him to be a happy man, or a weak man, or an ignorant man, or a wise man.

‘ You are very punctual, Mr. Crawley,’ said the bishop. Mr. Crawley simply bowed his head, still keeping his hands beneath his cloak. ‘ Will you not take a chair nearer to the fire ? ’ Mr. Crawley had not seated himself, but had placed himself in front of a chair at the extreme end of the room,—resolved that he would not use it unless he were duly asked.

‘ Thank you, my lord,’ he said, ‘ I am warm with walking, and, if you please, will avoid the fire.’

‘ You have not walked, Mr. Crawley ? ’

‘ Yes, my lord. I have been walking. ’

‘ Not from Hoggstock ! ’

Now this was a matter which Mr. Crawley certainly did not mean to discuss with the bishop. It might be well for the bishop to demand his presence in the palace, but it could be no part of the bishop's duty to inquire how he got there.

‘ That, my lord, is a matter of no moment, ’ said he.

‘ I am glad at any rate that I have been enabled to obey your lordship's order in coming hither on this morning. ’

Hitherto Mrs. Proudie had not said a word. She stood back in the room, near the fire,—more backward a good deal than she was accustomed to do when clergymen made their ordinary visits. On such occasions she would come forward and shake hands with them graciously,—graciously even, if proudly ; but she had felt that she must do nothing of that kind now ; there must be no shaking hands with a man who had stolen a cheque for twenty pounds ! It might probably be necessary to keep Mr. Crawley at a distance, and therefore she had remained in the background. But Mr. Crawley seemed to be disposed to keep himself in the background, and therefore she could speak. ‘ I hope your wife and children are well, Mr. Crawley, ’ she said.

‘ Thank you, madam, my children are well, and Mrs. Crawley suffers no special ailment at present. ’

‘ That is much to be thankful for, Mr. Crawley. ’ Whether he were or were not thankful for such mercies as these was no business of the bishop or of the bishop's wife. That was between him and his God. So he would not even bow to this civility,

but sat with his head erect, and with a great frown on his heavy brow.

Then the bishop rose from his chair to speak, intending to take up a position on the rug. But as he did so Mr. Crawley, who had seated himself on an intimation that he was expected to sit down, rose also, and the bishop found that he would thus lose his expected vantage. 'Will you not be seated, Mr. Crawley?' said the bishop. Mr. Crawley smiled, but stood his ground. Then the bishop returned to his arm-chair, and Mr. Crawley also sat down again. 'Mr. Crawley,' began the bishop, 'this matter which came the other day before the magistrates at Silverbridge has been a most unfortunate affair. It has given me, I can assure you, the most sincere pain.'

Mr. Crawley had made up his mind how far the bishop should be allowed to go without a rebuke. He had told himself that it would only be natural, and would not be unbecoming, that the bishop should allude to the meeting of the magistrates and to the alleged theft, and that therefore such allusion should be endured with patient humility. And, moreover, the more rope he gave the bishop, the more likely the bishop would be to entangle himself. It certainly was Mr. Crawley's wish that the bishop should entangle himself. He, therefore, replied very meekly, 'It has been most unfortunate, my lord.'

'I have felt for Mrs. Crawley very deeply,' said Mrs. Proudie. Mr. Crawley had now made up his mind that as long as it was possible he would ignore the presence of Mrs. Proudie altogether; and, therefore, he made no sign that he had heard the latter remark.

'It has been most unfortunate,' continued the bishop. 'I have never before had a clergyman in my diocese placed in so distressing a position.'

'That is a matter of opinion, my lord,' said Mr. Crawley, who at that moment thought of a crisis which had come in the life of another clergyman in the diocese of Barchester, with the circumstances of which he had by chance been made acquainted.

'Exactly,' said the bishop. 'And I am expressing my opinion.' Mr. Crawley, who understood fighting, did not think that the time had yet come for striking a blow, so he simply bowed again. 'A most unfortunate position, Mr. Crawley,' continued the bishop. 'Far be it from me to express an opinion upon the matter, which will have to come before a jury of your countrymen. It is enough for me to know that the magistrates assembled at Silverbridge, gentlemen to whom no doubt you must be known, as most of them live in your neighbourhood, have heard evidence upon the subject——'

'Most convincing evidence,' said Mrs. Proudie, interrupting her husband. Mr. Crawley's black brow became a little blacker as he heard the word, but still he ignored the woman. He not only did not speak, but did not turn his eye upon her.

'They have heard the evidence on the subject,' continued the bishop, 'and they have thought it proper to refer the decision as to your innocence or your guilt to a jury of your country-men.'

'And they were right,' said Mr. Crawley.

'Very possibly. I don't deny it. Probably,' said the bishop, whose eloquence was somewhat disturbed by Mr. Crawley's ready acquiescence.

‘Of course they were right,’ said Mrs. Proudie.

‘At any rate it is so,’ said the bishop. ‘You are in the position of a man amenable to the criminal laws of the land.’

‘There are no criminal laws, my lord,’ said Mr. Crawley; ‘but to such laws as there are we are all amenable,—your lordship and I alike.’

‘But you are so in a very particular way. I do not wish to remind you what might be your condition now, but for the interposition of private friends.’

‘I should be in the condition of a man not guilty before the law;—guiltless, as far as the law goes,—but kept in durance, not for faults of his own, but because otherwise, by reason of laches in the police, his presence at the assizes might not be ensured. In such a position a man’s reputation is made to hang for awhile on the trust which some friends or neighbours may have in it. I do not say that the test is a good one.’

‘You would have been put in prison, Mr. Crawley, because the magistrates were of opinion that you had taken Mr. Soames’s cheque,’ said Mrs. Proudie. On this occasion he did look at her. He turned one glance upon her from under his eyebrows, but he did not speak.

‘With all that I have nothing to do,’ said the bishop.

‘Nothing whatever, my lord,’ said Mr. Crawley.

‘But, bishop, I think that you have,’ said Mrs. Proudie. ‘The judgement formed by the magistrates as to the conduct of one of your clergymen makes it imperative upon you to act in the matter.’

‘Yes, my dear, yes; I am coming to that.’

What Mrs. Proudie says is perfectly true. I have been constrained most unwillingly to take action in this matter. It is undoubtedly the fact that you must at the next assizes surrender yourself at the court-house yonder, to be tried for this offence against the laws.'

'That is true. If I be alive, my lord, and have strength sufficient, I shall be there.'

'You must be there,' said Mrs. Proudie. 'The police will look to that, Mr. Crawley.' She was becoming very angry in that the man would not answer her a word. On this occasion again he did not even look at her.

'Yes; you will be there,' said the bishop. 'Now that is, to say the least of it, an unseemly position for a beneficed clergyman.'

'You said before, my lord, that it was an unfortunate position, and the word, methinks, was better chosen.'

'It is very unseemly, very unseemly indeed,' said Mrs. Proudie; 'nothing could possibly be more unseemly. The bishop might very properly have used a much stronger word.'

'Under these circumstances,' continued the bishop, 'looking to the welfare of your parish, to the welfare of the diocese, and allow me to say, Mr. Crawley, to the welfare of yourself also——'

'And especially to the souls of the people,' said Mrs. Proudie.

The bishop shook his head. It is hard to be impressively eloquent when one is interrupted at every best turned period, even by a supporting voice. 'Yes;—and looking of course to the religious interests of your people, Mr. Crawley, I came to the conclusion that it would be expedient

that you should cease your ministrations for a while.' The bishop paused, and Mr. Crawley bowed his head. 'I, therefore, sent over to you a gentleman with whom I am well acquainted, Mr. Thumble, with a letter from myself, in which I endeavoured to impress upon you, without the use of any severe language, what my convictions were.'

'Severe words are often the best mercy,' said Mrs. Proudie. Mr. Crawley had raised his hand, with his finger out, preparatory to answering the bishop. But as Mrs. Proudie had spoken he dropped his finger and was silent.

'Mr. Thumble brought me back your written reply,' continued the bishop, 'by which I was grieved to find that you were not willing to submit yourself to my counsel in the matter.'

'I was most unwilling, my lord. Submission to authority is at times a duty;—and at times opposition to authority is a duty also.'

'Opposition to just authority cannot be a duty, Mr. Crawley.'

'Opposition to usurped authority is an imperative duty,' said Mr. Crawley.

'And who is to be the judge?' demanded Mrs. Proudie. Then there was silence for a while; when, as Mr. Crawley made no reply, the lady repeated her question. 'Will you be pleased to answer my question, sir? Who, in such a case, is to be the judge?' But Mr. Crawley did not please to answer her question. 'The man is obstinate,' said Mrs. Proudie.

'I had better proceed,' said the bishop. 'Mr. Thumble brought me back your reply, which grieved me greatly.'

'It was contumacious and indecent,' said Mrs. Proudie.

The bishop again shook his head and looked so unutterably miserable that a smile came across Mr. Crawley's face. After all, others besides himself had their troubles and trials. Mrs. Proudie saw and understood the smile, and became more angry than ever. She drew her chair close to the table, and began to fidget with her fingers among the papers. She had never before encountered a clergyman so contumacious, so indecent, so unreverend,—so upsetting. She had had to do with men difficult to manage;—the archdeacon, for instance; but the archdeacon had never been so impertinent to her as this man. She had quarrelled once openly with a chaplain of her husband's, a clergyman whom she herself had introduced to her husband, and who had treated her very badly;—but not so badly, not with such unscrupulous violence, as she was now encountering from this ill-clothed beggarly man, this perpetual curate, with his dirty broken boots, this already half-convicted thief! Such was her idea of Mr. Crawley's conduct to her, while she was fingering the papers,—simply because Mr. Crawley would not speak to her.

'I forget where I was,' said the bishop. 'Oh. Mr. Thumble came back, and I received your letter;—of course I received it. And I was surprised to learn from that, that in spite of what had occurred at Silverbridge, you were still anxious to continue the usual Sunday ministrations in your church.'

'I was determined that I would do my duty at Hoggstock, as long as I might be left there to do it,' said Mr. Crawley.

‘Duty!’ said Mrs. Proudie.

‘Just a moment, my dear,’ said the bishop. ‘When Sunday came, I had no alternative but to send Mr. Thumble over again to Hogglesstock. It occurred to us,—to me and Mrs. Proudie——’

‘I will tell Mr. Crawley just now what has occurred to me,’ said Mrs. Proudie.

‘Yes;—just so. And I am sure that he will take it in good part. It occurred to me, Mr. Crawley, that your first letter might have been written in haste.’

‘It was written in haste, my lord; your messenger was waiting.’

‘Yes;—just so. Well; so I sent him again, hoping that he might be accepted as a messenger of peace. It was a most disagreeable mission for any gentleman, Mr. Crawley.’

‘Most disagreeable, my lord.’

‘And you refused him permission to obey the instructions which I had given him! You would not let him read from your desk, or preach from your pulpit.’

‘Had I been Mr. Thumble,’ said Mrs. Proudie, ‘I would have read from that desk and I would have preached from that pulpit.’

Mr. Crawley waited a moment, thinking that the bishop might perhaps speak again; but as he did not, but sat expectant as though he had finished his discourse, and now expected a reply, Mr. Crawley got up from his seat and drew near to the table. ‘My lord,’ he began, ‘it has all been just as you have said. I did answer your first letter in haste.’

‘The more shame for you,’ said Mrs. Proudie.

‘And therefore, for aught I know, my letter to

your lordship may be so worded as to need some apology.'

'Of course it needs an apology,' said Mrs. Proudie.

'But for the matter of it, my lord, no apology can be made, nor is any needed. I did refuse to your messenger permission to perform the services of my church, and if you send twenty more, I shall refuse them all,—till the time may come when it will be your lordship's duty, in accordance with the laws of the Church,—as borne out and backed by the laws of the land, to provide during my constrained absence for the spiritual wants of those poor people at Hoggstock.'

'Poor people, indeed,' said Mrs. Proudie. 'Poor wretches!'

'And, my lord, it may well be, that it shall soon be your lordship's duty to take due and legal steps for depriving me of my benefice at Hoggstock;—nay, probably, for silencing me altogether as to the exercise of my sacred profession!'

'Of course it will, sir. Your gown will be taken from you,' said Mrs. Proudie. The bishop was looking with all his eyes up at the great forehead and great eyebrows of the man, and was so fascinated by the power that was exercised over him by the other man's strength that he hardly now noticed his wife.

'It may well be so,' continued Mr. Crawley. 'The circumstances are strong against me; and, though your lordship has altogether misunderstood the nature of the duty performed by the magistrates in sending my case for trial,—although, as it seems to me, you have come to conclusions in this matter in ignorance of the very theory of our laws——'

‘Sir!’ said Mrs. Proudie.

‘Yet I can foresee the probability that a jury may discover me to have been guilty of theft.’

‘Of course the jury will do so,’ said Mrs. Proudie.

‘Should such verdict be given, then, my lord, your interference will be legal, proper, and necessary. And you will find that, even if it be within my power to oppose obstacles to your lordship’s authority, I will oppose no such obstacle. There is, I believe, no appeal in criminal cases.’

‘None at all,’ said Mrs. Proudie. ‘There is no appeal against your bishop. You should have learned that before.’

‘But till that time shall come, my lord, I shall hold my own at Hoggstock as you hold your own here at Barchester. Nor have you more power to turn me out of my pulpit by your mere voice, than I have to turn you out of your throne by mine. If you doubt me, my lord, your lordship’s ecclesiastical court is open to you. Try it there.’

‘You defy us, then?’ said Mrs. Proudie.

‘My lord, I grant your authority as bishop to be great, but even a bishop can only act as the law allows him.’

‘God forbid that I should do more,’ said the bishop.

‘Sir, you will find that your wicked threats will fall back upon your own head,’ said Mrs. Proudie.

‘Peace, woman,’ Mr. Crawley said, addressing her at last. The bishop jumped out of his chair at hearing the wife of his bosom called a woman. But he jumped rather in admiration than in anger. He had already begun to perceive that Mr. Crawley was a man who had better be left to take care of

the souls at Hoggstock, at any rate till the trial should come on.

'Woman!' said Mrs. Proudie, rising to her feet as though she really intended some personal encounter.

'Madam,' said Mr. Crawley, 'you should not interfere in these matters. You simply debase your husband's high office. The distaff were more fitting for you. My lord, good morning.' And before either of them could speak again, he was out of the room, and through the hall, and beyond the gate, and standing beneath the towers of the cathedral. Yes, he had, he thought, in truth crushed the bishop. He had succeeded in crumpling the bishop up within the clutch of his fist.—*The Last Chronicle of Barset.*

#### MR. HARDING PASSES

ON the morning of the Sunday after the dean's return Mr. Harding was lying in his bed, and Posy was sitting on the bed beside him. It was manifest to all now that he became feebler and feebler from day to day, and that he would never leave his bed again. Even the archdeacon had shaken his head, and had acknowledged to his wife that the last day for her father was near at hand. It would very soon be necessary that he should select another vicar for St. Ewolds.

'Grandpa won't play cat's-cradle,' said Posy, as Mrs. Arabin entered the room.

'No, darling,—not this morning,' said the old man. He himself knew well enough that he would never play cat's-cradle again. Even that was over for him now.

‘She teases you, papa,’ said Mrs. Arabin.

‘No, indeed,’ said he. ‘Posy never teases me ;’ and he slowly moved his withered hand down outside the bed, so as to hold the child by her frock. ‘Let her stay with me, my dear.’

‘Dr. Filgrave is downstairs, papa. You will see him, if he comes up ?’ Now Dr. Filgrave was the leading physician of Barchester, and nobody of note in the city,—or for the matter of that in the eastern division of the county,—was allowed to start upon the last great journey without some assistance from him as the hour of going drew nigh. I do not know that he had much reputation for prolonging life, but he was supposed to add a grace to the hour of departure. Mr. Harding had expressed no wish to see the doctor,—had rather declared his conviction that Dr. Filgrave could be of no possible service to him. But he was not a man to persevere in his objection in opposition to the wishes of the friends around him ; and as soon as the archdeacon had spoken a word on the subject he assented.

‘Of course, my dear, I will see him.’

‘And Posy shall come back when he has gone,’ said Mrs. Arabin.

‘Posy will do me more good than Dr. Filgrave, I am quite sure ;—but Posy shall go now.’ So Posy scrambled off the bed, and the doctor was ushered into the room.

‘A day or two will see the end of it, Mr. Archdeacon ;—I should say a day or two,’ said the doctor, as he met Dr. Grantly in the hall. ‘I should say that a day or two would see the end of it. Indeed I will not undertake that twenty-four hours may not see the close of his earthly troubles.’

He has no suffering, no pain, no disturbing cause. Nature simply retires to rest.' Dr. Filgrave, as he said this, made a slow falling motion with his hands, which alone on various occasions had been thought to be worth all the money paid for his attendance. 'Perhaps you would wish that I should step in in the evening, Mr. Dean? As it happens, I shall be at liberty.' The dean of course said that he would take it as an additional favour. Neither the dean nor the archdeacon had the slightest belief in Dr. Filgrave, and yet they would hardly have been contented that their father-in-law should have departed without him.

'Look at that man, now,' said the archdeacon, when the doctor had gone, 'who talks so glibly about nature going to rest. I've known him all my life. He's an older man by some months than our dear old friend upstairs. And he looks as if he were going to attend death-beds in Barchester for ever.'

'I suppose he is right in what he tells us now?' said the dean.

'No doubt he is; but my belief doesn't come from his saying it.' Then there was a pause as the two church dignitaries sat together, doing nothing, feeling that the solemnity of the moment was such that it would be hardly becoming that they should even attempt to read. 'His going will make an old man of me,' said the archdeacon.

'It will be different with you.'

'It will make an old woman of Eleanor, I fear.'

'I seem to have known him all my life,' said the archdeacon. 'I have known him ever since I left college; and I have known him as one man seldom knows another. There is nothing that he has done,

—as I believe, nothing that he has thought,—with which I have not been cognizant. I feel sure that he never had an impure fancy in his mind, or a faulty wish in his heart. His tenderness has surpassed the tenderness of woman; and yet, when an occasion came for showing it, he had all the spirit of a hero. I shall never forget his resignation of the hospital, and all that I did and said to make him keep it.’

‘But he was right?’

‘As Septimus Harding he was, I think, right; but it would have been wrong in any other man. And he was right, too, about the deanery.’ For promotion had once come in Mr. Harding’s way, and he, too, might have been dean of Barchester. ‘The fact is, he never was wrong. He couldn’t go wrong. He lacked guile, and he feared God,—and a man who does both will never go far astray. I don’t think he ever coveted aught in his life,—except a new case for his violoncello and somebody to listen to him when he played it.’ Then the archdeacon got up, and walked about the room in his enthusiasm; and, perhaps, as he walked some thoughts as to the sterner ambition of his own life passed through his mind. What things had he coveted? Had he lacked guile? He told himself that he had feared God,—but he was not sure that he was telling himself true even in that.

During the whole of the morning Mrs. Arabin and Mrs. Grantly were with their father, and during the greater part of the day there was absolute silence in the room. He seemed to sleep; and they, though they knew that in truth he was not sleeping, feared to disturb him by a word. About two Mrs. Baxter brought him his dinner, and he

did rouse himself, and swallowed a spoonful or two of soup and half a glass of wine. At this time Posy came to him, and stood at the bedside, looking at him with her great wide eyes. She seemed to be aware that life had now gone so far with her dear old friend that she must not be allowed to sit upon his bed again. But he put his hand out to her, and she held it, standing quite still and silent. When Mrs. Baxter came to take away the tray, Posy's mother got up, and whispered a word to the child. Then Posy went away, and her eyes never beheld the old man again. That was a day which Posy will never forget,—not though she should live to be much older than her grandfather was when she thus left him.

‘It is so sweet to have you both here,’ he said, when he had been lying silent for nearly an hour after the child had gone. Then they got up, and came and stood close to him. ‘There is nothing left for me to wish, my dears ;—nothing.’ Not long after that he expressed a desire that the two husbands,—his two sons-in-law,—should come to him ; and Mrs. Arabin went to them, and brought them to the room. As he took their hands he merely repeated the same words again. ‘There is nothing left for me to wish, my dears ;—nothing.’ He never spoke again above his breath ; but ever and anon his daughters, who watched him, could see that he was praying. The two men did not stay with him long, but returned to the gloom of the library. The gloom had almost become the darkness of night, and they were still sitting there without any light, when Mrs. Baxter entered the room. ‘The dear gentleman is no more,’ said Mrs. Baxter ; and it seemed to the archdeacon

that the very moment of his father's death had repeated itself. When Dr. Filgrave called he was told that his services could be of no further use. 'Dear, dear!' said the doctor. 'We are all dust, Mrs. Baxter; are we not?' There were people in Barchester who pretended to know how often the doctor had repeated this little formula during the last thirty years.

There was no violence of sorrow in the house that night; but there were aching hearts, and one heart so sore that it seemed that no cure for its anguish could ever reach it. 'He has always been with me,' Mrs. Arabin said to her husband, as he strove to console her. 'It was not that I loved him better than Susan, but I have felt so much more of his loving tenderness. The sweetness of his voice has been in my ears almost daily since I was born.'

They buried him in the cathedral which he had loved so well, and in which nearly all the work of his life had been done; and all Barchester was there to see him laid in his grave within the cloisters. There was no procession of coaches, no hearse, nor was there any attempt at funereal pomp. From the dean's side door, across the vaulted passage and into the transept,—over the little step upon which he had so nearly fallen when last he made his way out of the building,—the coffin was carried on men's shoulders. It was but a short journey from his bedroom to his grave. But the bell had been tolling sadly all the morning, and the nave and the aisles and the transepts, close up to the door leading from the transept into the cloister, were crowded with those who had known the name and the figure and the voice of Mr. Harding as long as

they had known anything. Up to this day no one would have said specially that Mr. Harding was a favourite in the town. He had never been forward enough in anything to become the acknowledged possessor of popularity. But, now that he was gone, men and women told each other how good he had been. They remembered the sweetness of his smile, and talked of loving little words which he had spoken to them,—either years ago or the other day, for his words had always been loving. The dean and the archdeacon came first, shoulder to shoulder, and after them came their wives. I do not know that it was the proper order for mourning, but it was a touching sight to be seen, and was long remembered in Barchester. Painful as it was for them, the two women would be there, and the two sisters would walk together;—nor would they go before their husbands. Then there were the archdeacon's two sons,—for the Rev. Charles Grantly had come to Plumstead on the occasion. And in the vaulted passage which runs between the deanery and the end of the transept all the chapter, with the choir, the prebendaries, with the fat old chancellor, the precentor, and the minor canons down to the little choristers,—they all were there, and followed in at the transept door, two by two. And in the transept they were joined by another clergyman whom no one had expected to see that day. The bishop was there, looking old and worn,—almost as though he were unconscious of what he was doing. Since his wife's death no one had seen him out of the palace or of the palace grounds till that day. But there he was,—and they made way for him into the procession behind the two ladies,—

and the archdeacon, when he saw it, resolved that there should be peace in his heart, if peace might be possible.

They made their way into the cloisters where the grave had been dug,—as many as might be allowed to follow. The place indeed was open to all who chose to come; but they who had only slightly known the man, refrained from pressing upon those who had a right to stand around his coffin. But there was one other there whom the faithful chronicler of Barchester should mention. Before any other one had reached the spot, the sexton and the vergers between them had led in between them, among the graves beneath the cloisters, a blind man, very old, with a wondrous stoop, but who must have owned a grand stature before extreme old age had bent him, and they placed him sitting on a stone in the corner of the archway. But as soon as the shuffling of steps reached his ears, he raised himself with the aid of his stick, and stood during the service leaning against the pillar. The blind man was so old that he might almost have been Mr. Harding's father. This was John Bunce, a bedesman from Hiram's Hospital,—and none perhaps there had known Mr. Harding better than he had known him. When the earth had been thrown on to the coffin, and the service was over, and they were about to disperse, Mrs. Arabin went up to the old man, and taking his hand between hers whispered a word into his ear. 'Oh, Miss Eleanor,' he said. 'Oh, Miss Eleanor!' Within a fortnight he also was lying within the cathedral precincts.

And so they buried Mr. Septimus Harding, formerly Warden of Hiram's Hospital in the city

of Barchester, of whom the chronicler may say that that city never knew a sweeter gentleman or a better Christian.—*The Last Chronicle of Barset.*

## CHARLOTTE BRONTË

1816-55

### JANE EYRE

#### (i) THE WEDDING STOPPED

SOPHIE came at seven to dress me : she was very long indeed in accomplishing her task ; so long that Mr. Rochester, grown, I suppose, impatient of my delay, sent up to ask why I did not come. She was just fastening my veil (the plain square of blond after all) to my hair with a brooch ; I hurried from under her hands as soon as I could.

‘ Stop ! ’ she cried in French. ‘ Look at yourself in the mirror : you have not taken one peep.’

So I turned at the door : I saw a robed and veiled figure, so unlike my usual self that it seemed almost the image of a stranger. ‘ Jane ! ’ called a voice, and I hastened down. I was received at the foot of the stairs by Mr. Rochester.

‘ Lingerer ! ’ he said, ‘ my brain is on fire with impatience, and you tarry so long ! ’

He took me into the dining-room, surveyed me keenly all over, pronounced me ‘ fair as a lily, and not only the pride of his life, but the desire of his eyes,’ and then telling me he would give me but ten minutes to eat some breakfast, he rang the bell. One of his lately hired servants, a footman, answered it.

‘ Is John getting the carriage ready ? ’

‘ Yes, sir. ’

‘ Is the luggage brought down ? ’

‘ They are bringing it down, sir. ’

‘ Go you to the church : see if Mr. Wood (the clergyman) and the clerk are there : return and tell me. ’

The church, as the reader knows, was but just beyond the gates ; the footman soon returned.

‘ Mr. Wood is in the vestry, sir, putting on his surplice. ’

‘ And the carriage ? ’

‘ The horses are harnessing. ’

‘ We shall not want it to go to church ; but it must be ready the moment we return : all the boxes and luggage arranged and strapped on, and the coachman in his seat. ’

‘ Yes, sir. ’

‘ Jane, are you ready ? ’

I rose. There were no groomsmen, no bridesmaids, no relatives to wait for or marshal : none but Mr. Rochester and I. Mrs. Fairfax stood in the hall as we passed. I would fain have spoken to her, but my hand was held by a grasp of iron : I was hurried along by a stride I could hardly follow ; and to look at Mr. Rochester’s face was to feel that not a second of delay would be tolerated for any purpose. I wonder what other bridegroom ever looked as he did—so bent up to a purpose, so grimly resolute : or who, under such steadfast brows, ever revealed such flaming and flashing eyes.

I know not whether the day was fair or foul ; in descending the drive, I gazed neither on sky nor earth : my heart was with my eyes ; and both

seemed migrated into Mr. Rochester's frame. I wanted to see the invisible thing on which, as we went along, he appeared to fasten a glance fierce and fell. I wanted to feel the thoughts whose force he seemed breasting and resisting.

At the churchyard wicket he stopped: he discovered I was quite out of breath. 'Am I cruel in my love?' he said. 'Delay an instant: lean on me, Jane.'

And now I can recall the picture of the grey old house of God rising calm before me, of a rook wheeling round the steeple, of a ruddy morning sky beyond. I remember something, too, of the green grave-mounds; and I have not forgotten, either, two figures of strangers straying amongst the low hillocks, and reading the mementoes graven on the few mossy head-stones. I noticed them, because, as they saw us, they passed round to the back of the church; and I doubted not they were going to enter by the side-aisle door, and witness the ceremony. By Mr. Rochester they were not observed; he was earnestly looking at my face, from which the blood had, I daresay, momentarily fled: for I felt my forehead dewy, and my cheeks and lips cold. When I rallied, which I soon did, he walked gently with me up the path to the porch.

We entered the quiet and humble temple; the priest waited in his white surplice at the lowly altar, the clerk beside him. All was still: two shadows only moved in a remote corner. My conjecture had been correct: the strangers had slipped in before us, and they now stood by the vault of the Rochesters, their backs towards us, viewing through the rails the old time-stained

marble tomb, where a kneeling angel guarded the remains of Damer de Rochester, slain at Marston Moor in the time of the civil wars ; and of Elizabeth, his wife.

Our place was taken at the communion rails. Hearing a cautious step behind me, I glanced over my shoulder : one of the strangers—a gentleman, evidently—was advancing up the chancel. The service began. The explanation of the intent of matrimony was gone through ; and then the clergyman came a step farther forward, and, bending slightly towards Mr. Rochester, went on.

‘I require and charge you both (as ye will answer at the dreadful day of judgement, when the secrets of all hearts shall be disclosed), that if either of you know any impediment why ye may not lawfully be joined together in matrimony, ye do now confess it ; for be ye well assured that so many as are coupled together otherwise than God’s Word doth allow, are not joined together by God, neither is their matrimony lawful.’

He paused, as the custom is. When is the pause after that sentence ever broken by reply ? Not, perhaps, once in a hundred years. And the clergyman, who had not lifted his eyes from his book, and had held his breath but for a moment, was proceeding : his hand was already stretched towards Mr. Rochester, as his lips unclosed to ask, ‘Wilt thou have this woman for thy wedded wife ?’—when a distinct and near voice said :—

‘The marriage cannot go on : I declare the existence of an impediment.’

The clergyman looked up at the speaker, and stood mute ; the clerk did the same ; Mr. Rochester moved slightly, as if an earthquake had rolled

under his feet : taking a firmer footing, and not turning his head or eyes, he said, ' Proceed.'

Profound silence fell when he had uttered that word, with deep but low intonation. Presently Mr. Wood said—

' I cannot proceed without some investigation into what has been asserted, and evidence of its truth or falsehood.'

' The ceremony is quite broken off,' subjoined the voice behind us. ' I am in a condition to prove my allegation : an insuperable impediment to this marriage exists.'

Mr. Rochester heard, but heeded not : he stood stubborn and rigid, making no movement but to possess himself of my hand. What a hot and strong grasp he had !—and how like quarried marble was his pale, firm, massive front at this moment ! How his eye shone, still watchful, and yet wild beneath !

Mr. Wood seemed at a loss. ' What is the nature of the impediment ? ' he asked. ' Perhaps it may be got over—explained away ? '

' Hardly,' was the answer : ' I have called it insuperable, and I speak advisedly.'

The speaker came forward, and leaned on the rails. He continued, uttering each word distinctly, calmly, steadily, but not loudly—

' It simply consists in the existence of a previous marriage. Mr. Rochester has a wife now living.'

My nerves vibrated to those low-spoken words as they had never vibrated to thunder—my blood felt their subtle violence as it had never felt frost or fire : but I was collected, and in no danger of swooning. I looked at Mr. Rochester : I made him look at me. His whole face was colourless

rock : his eye was both spark and flint. He disavowed nothing : he seemed as if he would defy all things. Without speaking, without smiling, without seeming to recognize in me a human being, he only twined my waist with his arm, and riveted me to his side.

‘ Who are you ? ’ he asked of the intruder.

‘ My name is Briggs, a solicitor of — Street, London.’

‘ And you would thrust on me a wife ? ’

‘ I would remind you of your lady’s existence, sir ; which the law recognizes, if you do not.’

‘ Favour me with an account of her—with her name, her parentage, her place of abode.’

‘ Certainly.’ Mr. Briggs calmly took a paper from his pocket, and read out in a sort of official, nasal voice :—

‘ “ I affirm and can prove that on the 20th of October A. D. — (a date of fifteen years back), Edward Fairfax Rochester, of Thornfield Hall, in the county of —, and of Ferndean Manor, in —shire, England, was married to my sister, Bertha Antoinetta Mason, daughter of Jonas Mason, merchant, and of Antoinetta his wife, a Creole, at — church, Spanish Town, Jamaica. The record of the marriage will be found in the register of that church—a copy of it is now in my possession. Signed, Richard Mason.” ’

‘ That—if a genuine document—may prove I have been married, but it does not prove that the woman mentioned therein as my wife is still living.’

‘ She was living three months ago,’ returned the lawyer.

‘ How do you know ? ’

‘ I have a witness to the fact, whose testimony even you, sir, will scarcely controvert.’

‘ Produce him—or go to hell.’

‘ I will produce him first—he is on the spot. Mr. Mason, have the goodness to step forward.’

Mr. Rochester, on hearing the name, set his teeth ; he experienced, too, a sort of strong convulsive quiver ; near to him as I was, I felt the spasmodic movement of fury or despair run through his frame. The second stranger, who had hitherto lingered in the background, now drew near ; a pale face looked over the solicitor’s shoulder—yes, it was Mason himself. Mr. Rochester turned and glared at him. His eye, as I have often said, was a black eye : it had now a tawny, nay, a bloody light in its gloom ; and his face flushed—olive cheek and hueless forehead received a glow, as from spreading, ascending heart-fire : and he stirred, lifted his strong arm—he could have struck Mason, dashed him on the church-floor, shocked by ruthless blow the breath from his body—but Mason shrank away, and cried faintly, ‘ Good God ! ’ Contempt fell cool on Mr. Rochester—his passion died as if a blight had shrivelled it up : he only asked—‘ What have *you* to say ? ’

An inaudible reply escaped Mason’s white lips.

‘ The devil is in it if you cannot answer distinctly. I again demand, what have *you* to say ? ’

‘ Sir—sir,’ interrupted the clergyman, ‘ do not forget you are in a sacred place.’ Then addressing Mason, he inquired gently, ‘ Are you aware, sir, whether or not this gentleman’s wife is still living ? ’

‘ Courage,’ urged the lawyer,—‘ speak out.’

‘ She is now living at Thornfield Hall,’ said

Mason, in more articulate tones : ‘ I saw her there last April. I am her brother.’

‘ At Thornfield Hall ! ’ ejaculated the clergyman. ‘ Impossible ! I am an old resident in this neighbourhood, sir, and I never heard of a Mrs. Rochester at Thornfield Hall.’

I saw a grim smile contort Mr. Rochester’s lips, and he muttered—

‘ No, by God ! I took care that none should hear of it—or of her under that name.’ He mused—for ten minutes he held counsel with himself : he formed his resolve, and announced it—

‘ Enough ! all shall bolt out at once, like the bullet from the barrel. Wood, close your book and take off your surplice ; John Green (to the clerk), leave the church ; there will be no wedding to-day.’ The man obeyed.

Mr. Rochester continued, hardily and recklessly : ‘ Bigamy is an ugly word !—I meant, however, to be a bigamist ; but fate has out-manœuvred me, or Providence has checked me,—perhaps the last. I am little better than a devil at this moment ; and, as my pastor there would tell me, deserve no doubt the sternest judgements of God,—even to the quenchless fire and deathless worm. Gentlemen, my plan is broken up !—what this lawyer and his client say is true : I have been married ; and the woman to whom I was married lives ! You say you never heard of a Mrs. Rochester at the house up yonder, Wood ; but I daresay you have many a time inclined your ear to gossip about the mysterious lunatic kept there under watch and ward. Some have whispered to you that she is my bastard half-sister : some, my cast-off mistress ; I now inform you that she is

my wife, whom I married fifteen years ago,—Bertha Mason by name; sister of this resolute personage, who is now, with his quivering limbs and white cheeks, showing you what a stout heart men may bear. Cheer up, Dick!—never fear me!—I'd almost as soon strike a woman as you. Bertha Mason is mad; and she came of a mad family;—idiots and maniacs through three generations! Her mother, the Creole, was both a mad-woman and a drunkard!—as I found out after I had wed the daughter: for they were silent on family secrets before. Bertha, like a dutiful child, copied her parent in both points. I had a charming partner—pure, wise, modest: you can fancy I was a happy man. I went through rich scenes! Oh! my experience has been heavenly, if you only knew it! But I owe you no further explanation. Briggs, Wood, Mason,—I invite you all to come up to the house and visit Mrs. Poole's patient, and *my wife*! You shall see what sort of a being I was cheated into espousing, and judge whether or not I had a right to break the compact, and seek sympathy with something at least human. This girl,' he continued, looking at me, 'knew no more than you, Wood, of the disgusting secret: she thought all was fair and legal, and never dreamt she was going to be entrapped into a feigned union with a defrauded wretch, already bound to a bad, mad, and embruted partner! Come all of you, follow!'

Still holding me fast, he left the church: the three gentlemen came after. At the front door of the hall we found the carriage.

'Take it back to the coach-house, John,' said Mr. Rochester coolly; 'it will not be wanted to-day.'

At our entrance, Mrs. Fairfax, Adèle, Sophie, Leah, advanced to meet and greet us.

‘To the right about—every soul!’ cried the master; ‘away with your congratulations! Who wants them? Not I!—they are fifteen years too late!’

He passed on and ascended the stairs, still holding my hand, and still beckoning the gentlemen to follow him, which they did. We mounted the first staircase, passed up the gallery, proceeded to the third storey: the low, black door, opened by Mr. Rochester’s master-key, admitted us to the tapestried room, with its great bed and its pictorial cabinet.

‘You know this place, Mason,’ said our guide; ‘she bit and stabbed you here.’

He lifted the hangings from the wall, uncovering the second door: this, too, he opened. In a room without a window, there burnt a fire guarded by a high and strong fender, and a lamp suspended from the ceiling by a chain. Grace Poole bent over the fire, apparently cooking something in a saucepan. In the deep shade, at the farther end of the room, a figure ran backwards and forwards. What it was, whether beast or human being, one could not, at first sight, tell: it grovelled, seemingly, on all fours; it snatched and growled like some strange wild animal: but it was covered with clothing; and a quantity of dark, grizzled hair, wild as a mane, hid its head and face.

‘Good-morrow, Mrs. Poole!’ said Mr. Rochester. ‘How are you? and how is your charge to-day?’

‘We’re tolerable, sir, I thank you,’ replied Grace, lifting the boiling mess carefully on to the hob: ‘rather snappish, but not ’rageous.’

A fierce cry seemed to give the lie to her favourable report : the clothed hyena rose up, and stood tall on its hind-feet.

‘ Ah ! sir, she sees you ! ’ exclaimed Grace : ‘ you’d better not stay.’

‘ Only a few moments, Grace : you must allow me a few moments.’

‘ Take care then, sir !—for God’s sake, take care ! ’

The maniac bellowed : she parted her shaggy locks from her visage, and gazed wildly at her visitors. I recognized well that purple face,—those bloated features. Mrs. Poole advanced.

‘ Keep out of the way,’ said Mr. Rochester, thrusting her aside : ‘ she has no knife now, I suppose ? and I’m on my guard.’

‘ One never knows what she has, sir : she is so cunning : it is not in mortal discretion to fathom her craft.’

‘ We had better leave her,’ whispered Mason.

‘ Go to the devil ! ’ was his brother-in-law’s recommendation.

‘ ‘Ware ! ’ cried Grace. The three gentlemen retreated simultaneously. Mr. Rochester flung me behind him : the lunatic sprang and grappled his throat viciously, and laid her teeth to his cheek : they struggled. She was a big woman, in stature almost equalling her husband, and corpulent besides : she showed virile force in the contest—more than once she almost throttled him, athletic as he was. He could have settled her with a well-planted blow ; but he would not strike : he would only wrestle. At last he mastered her arms ; Grace Poole gave him a cord, and he pinioned them behind her : with more rope, which was at

hand, he bound her to a chair. The operation was performed amidst the fiercest yells and the most convulsive plunges. Mr. Rochester then turned to the spectators: he looked at them with a smile both acrid and desolate.

‘That is *my wife*,’ said he. ‘Such is the sole conjugal embrace I am ever to know—such are the endearments which are to solace my leisure hours! And *this* is what I wished to have’ (laying his hand on my shoulder): ‘this young girl, who stands so grave and quiet at the mouth of hell, looking collectedly at the gambols of a demon. I wanted her just as a change after that fierce ragout. Wood and Briggs, look at the difference! Compare these clear eyes with the red balls yonder—this face with that mask—this form with that bulk; then judge me, priest of the gospel and man of the law, and remember with what judgement ye judge ye shall be judged! Off with you now. I must shut up my prize.’

## (ii) HOMELESS

My eye still roved over the sullen swell and along the moor-edge, vanishing amidst the wildest scenery, when at one dim point, far in among the marshes and the ridges, a light sprang up. ‘That is an *ignis fatuus*,’ was my first thought; and I expected it would soon vanish. It burnt on, however, quite steadily, neither receding nor advancing. ‘Is it, then, a bonfire just kindled?’ I questioned. I watched to see whether it would spread: but no; as it did not diminish, so it did not enlarge. ‘It may be a candle in a house,’ I then conjectured; ‘but if so, I can never reach

it. It is much too far away : and were it within a yard of me, what would it avail ? I should but knock at the door to have it shut in my face.'

And I sank down where I stood, and hid my face against the ground. I lay still a while : the night-wind swept over the hill and over me, and died moaning in the distance ; the rain fell fast, wetting me afresh to the skin. Could I but have stiffened to the still frost—the friendly numbness of death—it might have pelted on ; I should not have felt it ; but my yet living flesh shuddered at its chilling influence. I rose ere long.

The light was yet there, shining dim but constant through the rain. I tried to walk again : I dragged my exhausted limbs slowly towards it. It led me aslant over the hill, through a wide bog, which would have been impassible in winter, and was splashy and shaking even now, in the height of summer. Here I fell twice ; but as often I rose and rallied my faculties. This light was my forlorn hope : I must gain it.

Having crossed the marsh, I saw a trace of white over the moor. I approached it ; it was a road or a track : it led straight up to the light, which now beamed from a sort of knoll, amidst a clump of trees—firs, apparently, from what I could distinguish of the character of their forms and foliage through the gloom. My star vanished as I drew near : some obstacle had intervened between me and it. I put out my hand to feel the dark mass before me : I discriminated the rough stones of a low wall—above it, something like palisades, and within, a high and prickly hedge. I groped on. Again a whitish object gleamed before me : it was a gate—a wicket ; it moved on its hinges as

I touched it. On each side stood a sable bush—holly or yew.

Entering the gate and passing the shrubs, the silhouette of a house rose to view, black, low, and rather long; but the guiding light shone nowhere. All was obscurity. Were the inmates retired to rest? I feared it must be so. In seeking the door, I turned an angle: there shot out the friendly gleam again, from the lozenged panes of a very small latticed window, within a foot of the ground, made still smaller by the growth of ivy or some other creeping plant, whose leaves clustered thick over the portion of the house wall in which it was set. The aperture was so screened and narrow, that curtain or shutter had been deemed unnecessary; and when I stooped down and put aside the spray of foliage shooting over it, I could see all within. I could see clearly a room with a sanded floor, clean scoured; a dresser of walnut, with pewter plates ranged in rows, reflecting the redness and radiance of a glowing peat fire. I could see a clock, a white deal table, some chairs. The candle, whose ray had been my beacon, burnt on the table; and by its light an elderly woman, somewhat rough looking, but scrupulously clean, like all about her, was knitting a stocking.

I noticed these objects cursorily only—in them there was nothing extraordinary. A group of more interest appeared near the hearth, sitting still amidst the rosy peace and warmth suffusing it. Two young, graceful women—ladies in every point—sat, one in a low rocking-chair, the other on a lower stool; both wore deep mourning of crape and bombazeen, which sombre garb singularly set off very fair necks and faces: a large old pointer

dog rested its massive head on the knee of one girl—in the lap of the other was cushioned a black cat.

A strange place was this humble kitchen for such occupants! Who were they? They could not be the daughters of the elderly person at the table; for she looked like a rustic, and they were all delicacy and cultivation. I had nowhere seen such faces as theirs: and yet, as I gazed on them, I seemed intimate with every lineament. I cannot call them handsome—they were too pale and grave for the word: as they each bent over a book, they looked thoughtful almost to severity. A stand between them supported a second candle and two great volumes, to which they frequently referred, comparing them, seemingly, with the smaller books they held in their hands, like people consulting a dictionary to aid them in the task of translation. This scene was as silent as if all the figures had been shadows and the firelit apartment a picture: so hushed was it, I could hear the cinders fall from the grate, the clock tick in its obscure corner; and I even fancied I could distinguish the click-click of the woman's knitting-needles. When, therefore, a voice broke the strange stillness at last, it was audible enough to me.

'Listen, Diana,' said one of the absorbed students; 'Franz and old Daniel are together in the night-time, and Franz is telling a dream from which he has awakened in terror—listen!' And in a low voice she read something, of which not one word was intelligible to me; for it was in an unknown tongue—neither French nor Latin. Whether it were Greek or German I could not tell.

'That is strong,' she said, when she had finished: 'I relish it.' The other girl, who had lifted her

head to listen to her sister, repeated, while she gazed at the fire, a line of what had been read. At a later day, I knew the language and the book ; therefore, I will here quote the line : though, when I first heard it, it was only like a stroke on sounding brass to me—conveying no meaning :

“ ‘ Da trat hervor Einer, anzusehen wie die Sternen Nacht.’ Good ! good ! ’ she exclaimed, while her dark and deep eye sparkled. ‘ There you have a dim and mighty archangel fitly set before you ! The line is worth a hundred pages of fustian. ‘ Ich wäge die Gedanken in der Schale meines Zornes und die Werke mit dem Gewichte meines Grimms.’ I like it ! ’

Both were again silent.

‘ Is there ony country where they talk i’ that way ? ’ asked the old woman, looking up from her knitting.

‘ Yes, Hannah—a far larger country than England, where they talk in no other way.’

‘ Well, for sure case, I knawn’t how they can understand t’ one t’ other : and if either o’ ye went there, ye could tell what they said, I guess ? ’

‘ We could probably tell something of what they said, but not all—for we are not as clever as you think us, Hannah. We don’t speak German, and we cannot read it without a dictionary to help us.’

‘ And what good does it do you ? ’

‘ We mean to teach it some time—or at least the elements, as they say ; and then we shall get more money than we do now.’

‘ Varry like : but give ower studying ; ye’ve done enough for to-night.’

‘ I think we have : at least I’m tired. Mary, are you ? ’

‘ Mortally : after all, it’s tough work fagging away at a language with no master but a lexicon.’

‘ It is, especially such a language as this crabbed but glorious Deutsch. I wonder when St. John will come home.’

‘ Surely he will not be long now : it is just ten (looking at a little gold watch she drew from her girdle). It rains fast, Hannah : will you have the goodness to look at the fire in the parlour ? ’

The woman rose : she opened a door, through which I dimly saw a passage : soon I heard her stir a fire in an inner room ; she presently came back.

‘ Ah, childer ! ’ said she, ‘ it fair troubles me to go into yond’ room now : it looks so lonesome wi’ the chair empty and set back in a corner.’

She wiped her eyes with her apron : the two girls, grave before, looked sad now.

‘ But he is in a better place,’ continued Hannah : ‘ we shouldn’t wish him here again. And then, nobody need to have a quieter death nor he had.’

‘ You say he never mentioned us ? ’ inquired one of the ladies.

‘ He hadn’t time, bairn : he was gone in a minute, was your father. He had been a bit ailing like the day before, but nought to signify ; and when Mr. St. John asked if he would like either o’ ye to be sent for, he fair laughed at him. He began again with a bit of a heaviness in his head the next day—that is, a fortnight sin’—and he went to sleep and niver wakened : he wor a’most stark when your brother went into t’ chamber and fand him. Ah, childer ! that’s t’ last o’ t’ old stock—for ye and Mr. St. John is like of different soart to them ’at’s gone ; for all your mother wor mich i’ your

way, and a'most as book-learned. She wor the pictur' o' ye, Mary: Diana is more like your father.'

I thought them so similar I could not tell where the old servant (for such I now concluded her to be) saw the difference. Both were fair complexioned and slenderly made; both possessed faces full of distinction and intelligence. One, to be sure, had hair a shade darker than the other, and there was a difference in their style of wearing it; Mary's pale brown locks were parted and braided smooth: Diana's duskier tresses covered her neck with thick curls. The clock struck ten.

'Ye'll want your supper, I am sure,' observed Hannah; 'and so will Mr. St. John when he comes in.'

And she proceeded to prepare the meal. The ladies rose; they seemed about to withdraw to the parlour. Till this moment, I had been so intent on watching them, their appearance and conversation had excited in me so keen an interest, I had half-forgotten my own wretched position: now it recurred to me. More desolate, more desperate than ever, it seemed from contrast. And how impossible did it appear to touch the inmates of this house with concern on my behalf; to make them believe in the truth of my wants and woes—to induce them to vouchsafe a rest for my wanderings! As I groped out the door, and knocked at it hesitatingly, I felt that last idea to be a mere chimera. Hannah opened.

'What do you want?' she inquired, in a voice of surprise, as she surveyed me by the light of the candle she held.

'May I speak to your mistresses?' I said.

‘ You had better tell me what you have to say to them. Where do you come from ? ’

‘ I am a stranger. ’

‘ What is your business here at this hour ? ’

‘ I want a night’s shelter in an out-house or anywhere, and a morsel of bread to eat. ’

Distrust, the very feeling I dreaded, appeared in Hannah’s face. ‘ I’ll give you a piece of bread,’ she said, after a pause ; ‘ but we can’t take in a vagrant to lodge. It isn’t likely. ’

‘ Do let me speak to your mistresses. ’

‘ No, not I. What can they do for you ? You should not be roving about now ; it looks very ill. ’

‘ But where shall I go if you drive me away ? What shall I do ? ’

‘ Oh, I’ll warrant you know where to go and what to do. Mind you don’t do wrong, that’s all. Here is a penny ; now go—— ’

‘ A penny cannot feed me, and I have no strength to go farther. Don’t shut the door :—oh, don’t, for God’s sake ! ’

‘ I must ; the rain is driving in—— ’

‘ Tell the young ladies. Let me see them—— ’

‘ Indeed, I will not. You are not what you ought to be, or you wouldn’t make such a noise. Move off. ’

‘ But I must die if I am turned away. ’

‘ Not you. I’m fear’d you have some ill plans agate, that bring you about folk’s houses at this time o’ night. If you’ve any followers—house-breakers or such like—anywhere near, you may tell them we are not by ourselves in the house ; we have a gentleman, and dogs, and guns. ’ Here the honest but inflexible servant clapped the door to and bolted it within.

This was the climax. A pang of exquisite

suffering—a throe of true despair—rent and heaved my heart. Worn out, indeed, I was ; not another step could I stir. I sank on the wet doorstep : I groaned—I wrung my hands—I wept in utter anguish. Oh, this spectre of death ! Oh, this last hour, approaching in such horror ! Alas, this isolation—this banishment from my kind ! Not only the anchor of hope, but the footing of fortitude was gone—at least for a moment ; but the last I soon endeavoured to regain.

‘ I can but die,’ I said, ‘ and I believe in God. Let me try to wait His will in silence.’

These words I not only thought, but uttered ; and thrusting back all my misery into my heart, I made an effort to compel it to remain there—dumb and still.

‘ All men must die,’ said a voice quite close at hand ; ‘ but all are not condemned to meet a lingering and premature doom, such as yours would be if you perished here of want.’

‘ Who or what speaks ? ’ I asked, terrified at the unexpected sound, and incapable now of deriving from any occurrence a hope of aid. A form was near—what form, the pitch-dark night and my enfeebled vision prevented me from distinguishing. With a loud long knock, the new-comer appealed to the door.

‘ Is it you, Mr. St. John ? ’ cried Hannah.

‘ Yes—yes ; open quickly.’

‘ Well, how wet and cold you must be, such a wild night as it is ! Come in—your sisters are quite uneasy about you, and I believe there are bad folks about. There has been a beggar-woman—I declare she is not gone yet !—laid down there. Get up ! for shame ! Move off, I say ! ’

‘Hush, Hannah! I have a word to say to the woman. You have done your duty in excluding, now let me do mine in admitting her. I was near, and listened to both you and her. I think this is a peculiar case—I must at least examine into it. Young woman, rise, and pass before me into the house.’

With difficulty I obeyed him. Presently I stood within that clean, bright kitchen—on the very hearth—trembling, sickening; conscious of an aspect in the last degree ghastly, wild, and weather-beaten. The two ladies, their brother, Mr. St. John, the old servant, were all gazing at me.

‘St. John, who is it?’ I heard one ask.

‘I cannot tell: I found her at the door,’ was the reply.

‘She does look white,’ said Hannah.

‘As white as clay or death,’ was responded. ‘She will fall: let her sit.’

And indeed my head swam: I dropped, but a chair received me. I still possessed my senses, though just now I could not speak.

‘Perhaps a little water would restore her. Hannah, fetch some. But she is worn to nothing. How very thin, and how very bloodless!’

‘A mere spectre!’

‘Is she ill, or only famished?’

‘Famished, I think. Hannah, is that milk? Give it me, and a piece of bread.’

Diana (I knew her by the long curls which I saw drooping between me and the fire as she bent over me) broke some bread, dipped it in milk, and put it to my lips. Her face was near mine: I saw there was pity in it, and I felt sympathy in her hurried breathing. In her simple words, too, the same balm-like emotion spoke: ‘Try to eat.’

‘Yes—try,’ repeated Mary gently; and Mary’s hand removed my sodden bonnet and lifted my head. I tasted what they offered me: feebly at first, eagerly soon.

‘Not too much at first—restrain her,’ said the brother; ‘she has had enough.’ And he withdrew the cup of milk and the plate of bread.

‘A little more, St. John—look at the avidity in her eyes.’

‘No more at present, sister. Try if she can speak now—ask her her name.’

I felt I could speak, and I answered—‘My name is Jane Elliott.’ Anxious as ever to avoid discovery, I had before resolved to assume an *alias*.

‘And where do you live? Where are your friends?’

I was silent.

‘Can we send for any one you know?’

I shook my head.

‘What account can you give of yourself?’

Somehow, now that I had once crossed the threshold of this house, and once was brought face to face with its owners, I felt no longer outcast, vagrant, and disowned by the wide world. I dared to put off the mendicant—to resume my natural manner and character. I began once more to know myself; and when Mr. St. John demanded an account—which at present I was far too weak to render—I said after a brief pause—

‘Sir, I can give you no details to-night.’

‘But what, then,’ said he, ‘do you expect me to do for you?’

‘Nothing,’ I replied. My strength sufficed for but short answers. Diana took the word—

‘Do you mean,’ she asked, ‘that we have now

given you what aid you require ? and that we may dismiss you to the moor and the rainy night ? ’

I looked at her. She had, I thought, a remarkable countenance, instinct both with power and goodness. I took sudden courage. Answering her compassionate gaze with a smile, I said—‘ I will trust you. If I were a masterless and stray dog, I know that you would not turn me from your hearth to-night : as it is, I really have no fear. Do with me and for me as you like ; but excuse me from much discourse—my breath is short—I feel a spasm when I speak.’ All three surveyed me, and all three were silent.

‘ Hannah,’ said Mr. St. John, at last, ‘ let her sit there at present, and ask her no questions ; in ten minutes more, give her the remainder of that milk and bread. Mary and Diana, let us go into the parlour and talk the matter over.’

They withdrew. Very soon one of the ladies returned—I could not tell which. A kind of pleasant stupor was stealing over me as I sat by the genial fire. In an undertone she gave some directions to Hannah. Ere long, with the servant’s aid, I contrived to mount a staircase ; my dripping clothes were removed ; soon a warm, dry bed received me. I thanked God—experienced amidst unutterable exhaustion a glow of grateful joy—and slept.

### (iii) AN OFFER

‘ Let us rest here,’ said St. John, as we reached the first stragglers of a battalion of rocks, guarding a sort of pass, beyond which the beck rushed down a waterfall ; and where, still a little farther, the mountain shook off turf and flower, had only

heath for raiment and crag for gem—where it exaggerated the wild to the savage, and exchanged the fresh for the frowning—where it guarded the forlorn hope of solitude, and a last refuge for silence.

I took a seat : St. John stood near me. He looked up the pass and down the hollow ; his glance wandered away with the stream, and returned to traverse the unclouded heaven which coloured it : he removed his hat, let the breeze stir his hair and kiss his brow. He seemed in communion with the genius of the haunt : with his eye he bade farewell to something.

‘ And I shall see it again,’ he said aloud, ‘ in dreams when I sleep by the Ganges : and again in a more remote hour—when another slumber overcomes me—on the shore of a darker stream ! ’

Strange words of a strange love ! An austere patriot’s passion for his fatherland ! He sat down ; for half an hour we never spoke ; neither he to me nor I to him : that interval past, he recommenced—

‘ Jane, I go in six weeks ; I have taken my berth in an East Indiaman which sails on the 20th of June.’

‘ God will protect you ; for you have undertaken His work,’ I answered.

‘ Yes,’ said he, ‘ there is my glory and joy. I am the servant of an infallible Master. I am not going out under human guidance, subject to the defective laws and erring control of my feeble fellow-worms : my king, my lawgiver, my captain, is the All-perfect. It seems strange to me that all round me do not burn to enlist under the same banner,—to join in the same enterprise.’

‘ All have not your powers, and it would be

folly for the feeble to wish to march with the strong.'

'I do not speak to the feeble, or think of them : I address only such as are worthy of the work, and competent to accomplish it.'

'Those are few in number, and difficult to discover.'

'You say truly ; but when found, it is right to stir them up—to urge and exhort them to the effort—to show them what their gifts are, and why they were given—to speak Heaven's message in their ear,—to offer them, direct from God, a place in the ranks of His chosen.'

'If they are really qualified for the task, will not their own hearts be the first to inform them of it ?'

I felt as if an awful charm was framing round and gathering over me : I trembled to hear some fatal word spoken which would at once declare and rivet the spell.

'And what does *your* heart say ?' demanded St. John.

'My heart is mute,—my heart is mute,' I answered, struck and thrilled.

'Then I must speak for it,' continued the deep, relentless voice. 'Jane, come with me to India : come as my helpmeet and fellow-labourer.'

The glen and sky spun round : the hills heaved ! It was as if I had heard a summons from Heaven—as if a visionary messenger, like him of Macedonia, had enounced, 'Come over and help us !' But I was no apostle,—I could not behold the herald,—I could not receive his call.

'Oh, St. John !' I cried, 'have some mercy !' I appealed to one who, in the discharge of what

he believed his duty, knew neither mercy nor remorse. He continued—

‘God and nature intended you for a missionary’s wife. It is not personal, but mental endowments they have given you : you are formed for labour, not for love. A missionary’s wife you must—shall be. You shall be mine : I claim you—not for my pleasure, but for my Sovereign’s service.’

‘I am not fit for it : I have no vocation,’ I said.

#### (iv) JANE’S RETURN

The host himself brought my breakfast into the parlour. I requested him to shut the door and sit down : I had some questions to ask him. But when he complied, I scarcely knew how to begin ; such horror had I of the possible answers. And yet the spectacle of desolation I had just left prepared me in a measure for a tale of misery. The host was a respectable-looking, middle-aged man.

‘You know Thornfield Hall, of course ?’ I managed to say at last.

‘Yes, ma’am ; I lived there once.’

‘Did you ?’ Not in my time, I thought : you are a stranger to me.

‘I was the late Mr. Rochester’s butler,’ he added.

The late ! I seem to have received, with full force, the blow I had been trying to evade.

‘The late !’ I gasped. ‘Is he dead ?’

‘I mean the present gentleman, Mr. Edward’s father,’ he explained. I breathed again : my blood resumed its flow. Fully assured by these words that Mr. Edward—*my* Mr. Rochester (God bless him, wherever he was !)—was at least alive :

was, in short, 'the present gentleman.' Gladdening words ! It seemed I could hear all that was to come—whatever the disclosures might be—with comparative tranquillity. Since he was not in the grave, I could bear, I thought, to learn that he was at the Antipodes.

'Is Mr. Rochester living at Thornfield Hall now ?' I asked, knowing, of course, what the answer would be, but yet desirous of deferring the direct question as to where he really was.

'No, ma'am—oh, no ! No one is living there. I suppose you are a stranger in these parts, or you would have heard what happened last autumn,—Thornfield Hall is quite a ruin : it was burnt down just about harvest-time. A dreadful calamity ! such an immense quantity of valuable property destroyed : hardly any of the furniture could be saved. The fire broke out at dead of night, and before the engines arrived from Millcote, the building was one mass of flame. It was a terrible spectacle : I witnessed it myself.'

'At dead of night !' I muttered. Yes, that was ever the hour of fatality at Thornfield. 'Was it known how it originated ?' I demanded.

'They guessed, ma'am : they guessed. Indeed, I should say it was ascertained beyond a doubt. You are not perhaps aware,' he continued, edging his chair a little nearer the table, and speaking low, 'that there was a lady—a—a lunatic, kept in the house ?'

'I have heard something of it.'

'She was kept in very close confinement, ma'am ; people even for some years was not absolutely certain of her existence. No one saw her : they only knew by rumour that such a person

was at the Hall ; and who or what she was it was difficult to conjecture. They said Mr. Edward had brought her from abroad, and some believed she had been his mistress. But a queer thing happened a year since—a very queer thing.’

I feared now to hear my own story. I endeavoured to recall him to the main fact.

‘ And this lady ? ’

‘ This lady, ma’am,’ he answered, ‘ turned out to be Mr. Rochester’s wife ! The discovery was brought about in the strangest way. There was a young lady, a governess at the Hall, that Mr. Rochester fell in——’

‘ But the fire,’ I suggested.

‘ I’m coming to that, ma’am—that Mr. Edward fell in love with. The servants say they never saw anybody so much in love as he was : he was after her continually. They used to watch him—servants will, you know, ma’am—and he set store on her past everything : for all, nobody but him thought her so very handsome. She was a little small thing, they say, almost like a child. I never saw her myself ; but I’ve heard Leah, the housemaid, tell of her. Leah liked her well enough. Mr. Rochester was about forty, and this governess not twenty ; and you see, when gentlemen of his age fall in love with girls, they are often like as if they were bewitched. Well, he would marry her.’

‘ You shall tell me this part of the story another time,’ I said ; ‘ but now I have a particular reason for wishing to hear all about the fire. Was it suspected that this lunatic, Mrs. Rochester, had any hand in it ? ’

‘ You’ve hit it, ma’am : it’s quite certain that

it was her, and nobody but her, that set it going. She had a woman to take care of her called Mrs. Poole—an able woman in her line, and very trustworthy, but for one fault—a fault common to a deal of them nurses and matrons—*she kept a private bottle of gin by her*, and now and then took a drop over-much. It is excusable, for she had a hard life of it : but still it was dangerous ; for when Mrs. Poole was fast asleep after the gin and water, the mad lady, who was as cunning as a witch, would take the keys out of her pocket, let herself out of her chamber, and go roaming about the house, doing any wild mischief that came into her head. They say she had nearly burnt her husband in his bed once : but I don't know about that. However, on this night, she set fire first to the hangings of the room next her own, and then she got down to a lower story, and made her way to the chamber that had been the governess's—(she was like as if she knew somehow how matters had gone on, and had a spite at her)—and she kindled the bed there ; but there was nobody sleeping in it, fortunately. The governess had run away two months before ; and for all Mr. Rochester sought her as if she had been the most precious thing he had in the world, he never could hear a word of her ; and he grew savage—quite savage on his disappointment : he never was a wild man, but he got dangerous after he lost her. He would be alone, too. He sent Mrs. Fairfax, the housekeeper, away to her friends at a distance ; but he did it handsomely, for he settled an annuity on her for life : and she deserved it—she was a very good woman. Miss Adèle, a ward he had, was put to school. He broke off acquaintance

with all the gentry, and shut himself up like a hermit at the Hall.'

'What! did he not leave England?'

'Leave England? Bless you, no! He would not cross the door-stones of the house, except at night, when he walked just like a ghost about the grounds and in the orchard as if he had lost his senses—which it is my opinion he had; for a more spirited, bolder, keener gentleman than he was before that midge of a governess crossed him, you never saw, ma'am. He was not a man given to wine, or cards, or racing, as some are, and he was not so very handsome; but he had a courage and a will of his own, if ever man had. I knew him from a boy, you see: and for my part, I have often wished that Miss Eyre had been sunk in the sea before she came to Thornfield Hall.'

'Then Mr. Rochester was at home when the fire broke out?'

'Yes, indeed was he; and he went up to the attics when all was burning above and below, and got the servants out of their beds and helped them down himself, and went back to get his mad wife out of her cell. And then they called out to him that she was on the roof, where she was standing, waving her arms, above the battlements, and shouting out till they could hear her a mile off: I saw her and heard her with my own eyes. She was a big woman, and had long black hair: we could see it streaming against the flames as she stood. I witnessed, and several more witnessed, Mr. Rochester ascend through the skylight on to the roof; we heard him call "Bertha!" We saw him approach her; and then, ma'am, she

yelled and gave a spring, and the next minute she lay smashed on the pavement.'

'Dead?'

'Dead! Ay, dead as the stones on which her brains and blood were scattered.'

'Good God!'

'You may well say so, ma'am: it was frightful!'

He shuddered.

'And afterwards?' I urged.

'Well, ma'am, afterwards the house was burnt to the ground: there are only some bits of walls standing now.'

'Were any other lives lost?'

'No—perhaps it would have been better if there had.'

'What do you mean?'

'Poor Mr. Edward!' he ejaculated, 'I little thought ever to have seen it! Some say it was a just judgement on him for keeping his first marriage secret, and wanting to take another wife while he had one living: but I pity him, for my part.'

'You said he was alive?' I exclaimed.

'Yes, yes: he is alive; but many think he had better be dead.'

'Why? How?' My blood was again running cold. 'Where is he?' I demanded. 'Is he in England?'

'Ay—ay—he's in England; he can't get out of England, I fancy—he's a fixture now.'

What agony was this! And the man seemed resolved to protract it.

'He is stone-blind,' he said at last. 'Yes, he is stone-blind, is Mr. Edward.'

I had dreaded worse. I had dreaded he was mad. I summoned strength to ask what had caused this calamity.

‘It was all his own courage, and a body may say, his kindness, in a way, ma’am : he wouldn’t leave the house till every one else was out before him. As he came down the great staircase at last, after Mrs. Rochester had flung herself from the battlements, there was a great crash—all fell. He was taken out from under the ruins, alive, but sadly hurt : a beam had fallen in such a way as to protect him partly ; but one eye was knocked out, and one hand so crushed that Mr. Carter, the surgeon, had to amputate it directly. The other eye inflamed : he lost the sight of that also. He is now helpless, indeed—blind and a cripple.’

‘Where is he ? Where does he now live ?’

‘At Ferndean, a manor-house on a farm he has, about thirty miles off : quite a desolate spot.’

‘Who is with him ?’

‘Old John and his wife : he would have none else. He is quite broken down, they say.’

‘Have you any sort of conveyance ?’

‘We have a chaise, ma’am, a very handsome chaise.’

‘Let it be got ready instantly ; and if your post-boy can drive me to Ferndean before dark this day, I’ll pay both you and him twice the hire you usually demand.’

The manor-house of Ferndean was a building of considerable antiquity, moderate size, and no architectural pretensions, deep buried in a wood. I had heard of it before. Mr. Rochester often spoke of it, and sometimes went there. His father

had purchased the estate for the sake of the game covers. He would have let the house, but could find no tenant, in consequence of its ineligible and insalubrious site. Ferndean then remained uninhabited and unfurnished, with the exception of some two or three rooms fitted up for the accommodation of the squire when he went there in the season to shoot.

To this house I came just ere dark on an evening marked by the characteristics of sad sky, cold gale, and continued small penetrating rain. The last mile I performed on foot, having dismissed the chaise and driver with the double remuneration I had promised. Even when within a very short distance of the manor-house, you could see nothing of it, so thick and dark grew the timber of the gloomy wood about it. Iron gates between granite pillars showed me where to enter, and passing through them, I found myself at once in the twilight of close-ranked trees. There was a grass-grown track descending the forest aisle between hoar and knotty shafts and under branched arches. I followed it, expecting soon to reach the dwelling ; but it stretched on and on, it wound far and farther : no sign of habitation or grounds was visible.

I thought I had taken a wrong direction and lost my way. The darkness of natural as well as of sylvan dusk gathered over me. I looked round in search of another road. There was none : all was interwoven stem, columnar trunk, dense summer foliage—no opening anywhere.

I proceeded : at last my way opened, the trees thinned a little ; presently I beheld a railing, then the house—scarce, by this dim light, distinguish-

able from the trees, so dank and green were its decaying walls. Entering a portal, fastened only by a latch, I stood amidst a space of enclosed ground, from which the wood swept away in a semicircle. There were no flowers, no garden-beds; only a broad gravel-walk girdling a grass-plat, and this set in the heavy frame of the forest. The house presented two pointed gables in its front; the windows were latticed and narrow: the front door was narrow too, one step led up to it. The whole looked, as the host of the Rochester Arms had said, 'quite a desolate spot.' It was as still as a church on a week-day: the pattering rain on the forest leaves was the only sound audible in its vicinage.

'Can there be life here?' I asked.

Yes, life of some kind there was; for I heard a movement—that narrow front-door was unclosing, and some shape was about to issue from the grange.

It opened slowly: a figure came out into the twilight and stood on the step; a man without a hat: he stretched forth his hand as if to feel whether it rained. Dusk as it was, I had recognized him—it was my master, Edward Fairfax Rochester, and no other.

I stayed my step, almost my breath, and stood to watch him—to examine him, myself unseen, and alas! to him invisible. It was a sudden meeting, and one in which rapture was kept well in check by pain. I had no difficulty in restraining my voice from exclamation, my step from hasty advance.

His form was of the same strong and stalwart contour as ever; his port was still erect, his hair

was still raven black ; nor were his features altered or sunk : not in one year's space, by any sorrow, could his athletic strength be quelled or his vigorous prime blighted. But in his countenance I saw a change : that looked desperate and brooding—that reminded me of some wronged and fettered wild beast or bird, dangerous to approach in his sullen woe. The caged eagle, whose gold-ringed eyes cruelty has extinguished, might look as looked that sightless Samson.

And, reader, do you think I feared him in his blind ferocity ?—if you do, you little know me. A soft hope blent with my sorrow that soon I should dare to drop a kiss on that brow of rock, and on those lips so sternly sealed beneath it : but not yet. I would not accost him yet.

He descended the one step, and advanced slowly and gropingly towards the grass-plat. Where was his daring stride now ? Then he paused, as if he knew not which way to turn. He lifted his hand and opened his eyelids ; gazed blank, and with a straining effort, on the sky, and toward the amphitheatre of trees : one saw that all to him was void darkness. He stretched his right hand (the left arm, the mutilated one, he kept hidden in his bosom) ; he seemed to wish by touch to gain an idea of what lay around him : he met but vacancy still ; for the trees were some yards off where he stood. He relinquished the endeavour, folded his arms, and stood quiet and mute in the rain, now falling fast on his uncovered head. At this moment John approached him from some quarter.

‘ Will you take my arm, sir ? ’ he said ; ‘ there is a heavy shower coming on : had you not better go in ? ’

‘Let me alone,’ was the answer.

John withdrew without having observed me. Mr. Rochester now tried to walk about: vainly, —all was too uncertain. He groped his way back to the house, and, re-entering it, closed the door.

I now drew near and knocked: John’s wife opened for me. ‘Mary,’ I said, ‘how are you?’

She started as if she had seen a ghost: I calmed her. To her hurried ‘Is it really you, miss, come at this late hour to this lonely place?’ I answered by taking her hand; and then I followed her into the kitchen, where John now sat by a good fire. I explained to them, in few words, that I had heard all which had happened since I left Thornfield, and that I was come to see Mr. Rochester. I asked John to go down to the turnpike-house, where I had dismissed the chaise, and bring my trunk, which I had left there: and then, while I removed my bonnet and shawl, I questioned Mary as to whether I could be accommodated at the Manor House for the night; and finding that arrangements to that effect, though difficult, would not be impossible, I informed her I should stay. Just at this moment the parlour-bell rang.

‘When you go in,’ said I, ‘tell your master that a person wishes to speak to him, but do not give my name.’

‘I don’t think he will see you,’ she answered; ‘he refuses everybody.’

When she returned, I inquired what he had said.

‘You are to send in your name and your business,’ she replied. She then proceeded to fill a glass with water, and place it on a tray, together with candles.

‘Is that what he rang for?’ I asked.

‘Yes: he always has candles brought in at dark, though he is blind.’

‘Give the tray to me; I will carry it in.’

I took it from her hand: she pointed me out the parlour door. The tray shook as I held it; the water spilt from the glass; my heart struck my ribs loud and fast. Mary opened the door for me, and shut it behind me.

This parlour looked gloomy: a neglected handful of fire burnt low in the grate; and, leaning over it, with his head supported against the high, old-fashioned mantelpiece, appeared the blind tenant of the room. His old dog, Pilot, lay on one side, removed out of the way, and coiled up as if afraid of being inadvertently trodden upon. Pilot pricked up his ears when I came in: then he jumped up with a yelp and a whine, and bounded towards me: he almost knocked the tray from my hands. I set it on the table; then patted him, and said softly, ‘Lie down!’ Mr. Rochester turned mechanically to see what the commotion was: but as he *saw* nothing, he returned and sighed.

‘Give me the water, Mary,’ he said.

I approached him with the now only half-filled glass; Pilot followed me, still excited.

‘What is the matter?’ he inquired.

‘Down, Pilot!’ I again said. He checked the water on its way to his lips, and seemed to listen: he drank, and put the glass down. ‘This is you, Mary, is it not?’

‘Mary is in the kitchen,’ I answered.

He put out his hand with a quick gesture, but not seeing where I stood, he did not touch me. ‘Who is this? Who is this?’ he demanded,

trying, as it seemed, to see with those sightless eyes—unavailing and distressing attempt ! ‘Answer me—speak again !’ he ordered, imperiously and aloud.

‘Will you have a little more water, sir ? I spilt half of what was in the glass,’ I said.

‘*Who* is it ? *What* is it ? Who speaks ?’

‘Pilot knows me, and John and Mary know I am here. I came only this evening,’ I answered.

‘Great God !—what delusion has come over me ? What sweet madness has seized me ?’

‘No delusion—no madness : your mind, sir, is too strong for delusion, your health too sound for frenzy.’

‘And where is the speaker ? Is it only a voice ? Oh ! I *cannot* see, but I must feel, or my heart will stop and my brain burst. Whatever—whoever you are—be perceptible to the touch or I cannot live !’

He groped ; I arrested his wandering hand, and prisoned it in both mine.

‘Her very fingers !’ he cried ; ‘her small, slight fingers ! If so there must be more of her.’

The muscular hand broke from my custody ; my arm was seized, my shoulder—neck—waist—I was entwined and gathered to him.

‘Is it Jane ? *What* is it ? This is her shape—this is her size——’

‘And this her voice,’ I added. ‘She is all here : her heart, too. God bless you, sir ! I am glad to be so near you again.’

‘Jane Eyre !—Jane Eyre,’ was all he said.

‘My dear master,’ I answered, ‘I am Jane Eyre : I have found you out—I am come back to you.’

‘In truth ?—in the flesh ? My living Jane ?’

‘ You touch me, sir,—you hold me, and fast enough : I am not cold like a corpse, nor vacant like air, am I ? ’

‘ My living darling ! These are certainly her limbs, and these her features ; but I cannot be so blest, after all my misery. It is a dream ; such dreams as I have had at night when I have clasped her once more to my heart, as I do now ; and kissed her, as thus—and felt that she loved me, and trusted that she would not leave me.’

‘ Which I never will, sir, from this day.’

‘ Never will, says the vision ? But I always woke and found it an empty mockery ; and I was desolate and abandoned—my life dark, lonely, hopeless—my soul athirst and forbidden to drink—my heart famished and never to be fed. Gentle, soft dream, nestling in my arms now, you will fly, too, as your sisters have all fled before you : but kiss me before you go—embrace me, Jane.’

‘ There, sir—and there ! ’

I pressed my lips to his once brilliant and now rayless eyes—I swept his hair from his brow, and kissed that too. He suddenly seemed to arouse himself : the conviction of the reality of all this seized him.

‘ It is you—is it, Jane ? You are come back to me then ? ’

‘ I am.’

‘ And you do not lie dead in some ditch under some stream ? And you are not a pining outcast amongst strangers ? ’

‘ No, sir ! I am an independent woman now.’

‘ Independent ! What do you mean, Jane ? ’

‘ My uncle in Madeira is dead, and he left me five thousand pounds.’

‘ Ah ! this is practical—this is real ! ’ he cried : ‘ I should never dream that. Besides, there is that peculiar voice of hers, so animating and piquant, as well as soft ; it cheers my withered heart ; it puts life into it.—What, Janet ! Are you an independent woman ? A rich woman ? ’

‘ Quite rich, sir. If you won’t let me live with you, I can build a house of my own close up to your door, and you may come and sit in my parlour when you want company of an evening. ’

‘ But as you are rich, Jane, you have now, no doubt, friends who will look after you, and not suffer you to devote yourself to a blind lameter like me ? ’

‘ I told you I am independent, sir, as well as rich : I am my own mistress. ’

‘ And you will stay with me ? ’

‘ Certainly—unless you object. I will be your neighbour, your nurse, your housekeeper. I find you lonely : I will be your companion—to read to you, to walk with you, to sit with you, to wait on you, to be eyes and hands to you. Cease to look so melancholy, my dear master ; you shall not be left desolate, so long as I live. ’

He replied not : he seemed serious—abstracted ; he sighed ; he half-opened his lips as if to speak : he closed them again. I felt a little embarrassed. Perhaps I had too rashly overleaped conventionalities ; and he, like St. John, saw impropriety in my inconsiderateness. I had indeed made my proposal from the idea that he wished and would ask me to be his wife : an expectation, not the less certain because unexpressed, had buoyed me up, that he would claim me at once as his own. But no hint to that effect escaping him and his

countenance becoming more overcast, I suddenly remembered that I might have been all wrong, and was perhaps playing the fool unwittingly ; and I began gently to withdraw myself from his arms—but he eagerly snatched me closer.

‘No—no—Jane ; you must not go. No—I have touched you, heard you, felt the comfort of your presence—the sweetness of your consolation : I cannot give up these joys. I have little left in myself—I must have you. The world may laugh—may call me absurd, selfish—but it does not signify. My very soul demands you : it will be satisfied, or it will take deadly vengeance on its frame.’

(v) UNITED

Reader, I married him. A quiet wedding we had : he and I, the parson and clerk, were alone present. When we got back from church, I went into the kitchen of the manor-house, where Mary was cooking the dinner and John cleaning the knives, and I said—

‘Mary, I have been married to Mr. Rochester this morning.’ The housekeeper and her husband were both of that decent phlegmatic order of people, to whom one may at any time safely communicate a remarkable piece of news without incurring the danger of having one’s ears pierced by some shrill ejaculation, and subsequently stunned by a torrent of wordy wonderment. Mary did look up, and she did stare at me : the ladle with which she was basting a pair of chickens roasting at the fire, did for some three minutes hang suspended in air ; and for the same space of time John’s knives also had rest from the

polishing process : but Mary, bending again over the roast, said only—

‘ Have you, Miss ? Well, for sure ! ’

A short time after she pursued—‘ I seed you go out with the master, but I didn’t know you were gone to church to be wed ; ’ and she basted away. John, when I turned to him, was grinning from ear to ear.

‘ I telled Mary how it would be,’ he said : ‘ I knew what Mr. Edward ’ (John was an old servant, and had known his master when he was the cadet of the house, therefore, he often gave him his Christian name)—‘ I knew what Mr. Edward would do ; and I was certain he would not wait long neither : and he’s done right, for aught I know. I wish you joy, Miss ! ’ and he politely pulled his forelock.

‘ Thank you, John. Mr. Rochester told me to give you and Mary this.’ I put into his hand a five-pound note. Without waiting to hear more, I left the kitchen. In passing the door of that sanctum some time after, I caught the words—

‘ She’ll happen do better for him nor ony o’ t’ grand ladies.’ And again, ‘ If she ben’t one o’ th’ handsomest, she’s noan faâl and varry good-natured ; and i’ his een she’s fair beautiful, ony-body may see that.’—*Jane Eyre*.

## EMILY JANE BRONTË

1818-48

MR. LOCKWOOD'S INTRODUCTION TO  
WUTHERING HEIGHTS

1801.—I have just returned from a visit to my landlord—the solitary neighbour that I shall be troubled with. This is certainly a beautiful country! In all England, I do not believe that I could have fixed on a situation so completely removed from the stir of society. A perfect misanthropist's heaven: and Mr. Heathcliff and I are such a suitable pair to divide the desolation between us. A capital fellow! He little imagined how my heart warmed towards him when I beheld his black eyes withdraw so suspiciously under their brows, as I rode up, and when his fingers sheltered themselves, with a jealous resolution, still further in his waistcoat, as I announced my name.

‘Mr. Heathcliff?’ I said.

A nod was the answer.

‘Mr. Lockwood, your new tenant, sir. I do myself the honour of calling as soon as possible after my arrival, to express the hope that I have not inconvenienced you by my perseverance in soliciting the occupation of Thrushcross Grange: I heard yesterday you had had some thoughts——’

‘Thrushcross Grange is my own, sir,’ he interrupted, wincing. ‘I should not allow any one to inconvenience me, if I could hinder it—walk in!’

The ‘walk in’ was uttered with closed teeth, and expressed the sentiment, ‘Go to the Deuce’: even the gate over which he leant manifested no

sympathizing movement to the words; and I think that circumstance determined me to accept the invitation: I felt interested in a man who seemed more exaggeratedly reserved than myself.

When he saw my horse's breast fairly pushing the barrier, he did put out his hand to unchain it, and then sullenly preceded me up the causeway, calling, as we entered the court,—‘Joseph, take Mr. Lockwood's horse; and bring up some wine.’

‘Here we have the whole establishment of domestics, I suppose,’ was the reflection, suggested by this compound order. ‘No wonder the grass grows up between the flags, and cattle are the only hedge-cutters.’

Joseph was an elderly, nay, an old man: very old, perhaps, though hale and sinewy. ‘The Lord help us!’ he soliloquized in an undertone of peevish displeasure, while relieving me of my horse: looking, meantime, in my face so sourly that I charitably conjectured he must have need of divine aid to digest his dinner, and his pious ejaculation had no reference to my unexpected advent.

Wuthering Heights is the name of Mr. Heathcliff's dwelling. ‘Wuthering’ being a significant provincial adjective, descriptive of the atmospheric tumult to which its station is exposed in stormy weather. Pure, bracing ventilation they must have up there at all times, indeed: one may guess the power of the north wind blowing over the edge, by the excessive slant of a few stunted firs at the end of the house; and by a range of gaunt thorns all stretching their limbs one way, as if craving alms of the sun. Happily, the architect

had foresight to build it strong; the narrow windows are deeply set in the wall, and the corners defended with large jutting stones.

Before passing the threshold, I paused to admire a quantity of grotesque carving lavished over the front, and especially about the principal door; above which, among a wilderness of crumbling griffins and shameless little boys, I detected the date '1500', and the name 'Hareton Earnshaw'. I would have made a few comments, and requested a short history of the place from the surly owner; but his attitude at the door appeared to demand my speedy entrance, or complete departure, and I had no desire to aggravate his impatience previous to inspecting the penetralium.

One step brought us into the family sitting-room, without any introductory lobby or passage: they call it here 'the house' pre-eminently. It includes kitchen and parlour, generally; but I believe at Wuthering Heights the kitchen is forced to retreat altogether into another quarter: at least I distinguished a chatter of tongues, and a clatter of culinary utensils, deep within; and I observed no signs of roasting, boiling, or baking, about the huge fire-place; nor any glitter of copper saucepans and tin cullenders on the walls. One end, indeed, reflected splendidly both light and heat from ranks of immense pewter dishes, interspersed with silver jugs and tankards, towering row after row, on a vast oak dresser, to the very roof. The latter had never been underdrawn: its entire anatomy lay bare to an inquiring eye, except where a frame of wood laden with oatcakes and clusters of legs of beef, mutton, and ham, concealed it. Above the chimney were sundry

villanous old guns, and a couple of horse-pistols : and, by way of ornament, three gaudily painted canisters disposed along its ledge. The floor was of smooth, white stone ; the chairs, high-backed, primitive structures, painted green : one or two heavy black ones lurking in the shade. In an arch under the dresser, reposed a huge, liver-coloured bitch pointer, surrounded by a swarm of squealing puppies ; and other dogs haunted other recesses.

The apartment and furniture would have been nothing extraordinary as belonging to a homely, northern farmer, with a stubborn countenance, and stalwart limbs set out to advantage in knee-breeches and gaiters. Such an individual seated in his arm-chair, his mug of ale frothing on the round table before him, is to be seen in any circuit of five or six miles among these hills, if you go at the right time after dinner. But Mr. Heathcliff forms a singular contrast to his abode and style of living. He is a dark-skinned gipsy in aspect, in dress and manners a gentleman : that is, as much a gentleman as many a country squire : rather slovenly, perhaps, yet not looking amiss with his negligence, because he has an erect and handsome figure ; and rather morose. Possible, some people might suspect him of a degree of underbred pride ; I have a sympathetic chord within that tells me it is nothing of the sort : I know, by instinct, his reserve springs from an aversion to showy displays of feeling—to manifestations of mutual kindness. He'll love and hate equally under cover, and esteem it a species of impertinence to be loved or hated again. No, I'm running on too fast : I bestow my own attributes over liberally on him. Mr. Heathcliff may have entirely dissimilar reasons

for keeping his hand out of the way when he meets a would-be acquaintance, to those which actuate me. Let me hope my constitution is almost peculiar: my dear mother used to say I should never have a comfortable home; and only last summer I proved myself perfectly unworthy of one.

While enjoying a month of fine weather at the sea-coast, I was thrown into the company of a most fascinating creature: a real goddess in my eyes, as long as she took no notice of me. I 'never told my love' vocally; still, if looks have language, the merest idiot might have guessed I was over head and ears: she understood me at last, and looked a return—the sweetest of all imaginable looks. And what did I do? I confess it with shame—shrunk icily into myself, like a snail; at every glance retired colder and farther; till finally the poor innocent was led to doubt her own senses, and, overwhelmed with confusion at her supposed mistake, persuaded her mamma to decamp. By this curious turn of disposition I have gained the reputation of deliberate heartlessness; how undeserved, I alone can appreciate.

I took a seat at the end of the hearthstone opposite that towards which my landlord advanced, and filled up an interval of silence by attempting to caress the canine mother, who had left her nursery, and was sneaking wolfishly to the back of my legs, her lip curled up, and her white teeth watering for a snatch. My caress provoked a long, guttural gnarl.

'You'd better let the dog alone,' growled Mr. Heathcliff in unison, checking fiercer demonstrations with a punch of his foot. 'She's not

accustomed to be spoiled—not kept for a pet.’ Then, striding to a side door, he shouted again, ‘Joseph!’

Joseph mumbled indistinctly in the depths of the cellar, but gave no intimation of ascending; so his master dived down to him, leaving me *vis-à-vis* the ruffianly bitch and a pair of grim shaggy sheep-dogs, who shared with her a jealous guardianship over all my movements. Not anxious to come in contact with their fangs, I sat still; but, imagining they would scarcely understand tacit insults, I unfortunately indulged in winking and making faces at the trio, and some turn of my physiognomy so irritated madam, that she suddenly broke into a fury and leapt on my knees. I flung her back, and hastened to interpose the table between us. This proceeding roused the whole hive: half a dozen four-footed fiends, of various sizes and ages, issued from hidden dens to the common centre. I felt my heels and coat-laps peculiar subjects of assault; and, parrying off the larger combatants as effectually as I could with the poker, I was constrained to demand, aloud, assistance from some of the household in re-establishing peace.

Mr. Heathcliff and his man climbed the cellar steps with vexatious phlegm: I don’t think they moved one second faster than usual, though the hearth was an absolute tempest of worrying and yelping. Happily, an inhabitant of the kitchen made more dispatch: a lusty dame, with tucked-up gown, bare arms, and fire-flushed cheeks, rushed into the midst of us flourishing a frying-pan: and used that weapon, and her tongue, to such purpose, that the storm subsided magically, and she only

remained, heaving like a sea after a high wind, when her master entered on the scene.

‘What the devil is the matter?’ he asked, eyeing me in a manner that I could ill endure after this inhospitable treatment.

‘What the devil, indeed!’ I muttered. ‘The herd of possessed swine could have had no worse spirits in them than those animals of yours, sir. You might as well leave a stranger with a brood of tigers!’

‘They won’t meddle with persons who touch nothing,’ he remarked, putting the bottle before me, and restoring the displaced table. ‘The dogs do right to be vigilant. Take a glass of wine?’

‘No, thank you.’

‘Not bitten, are you?’

‘If I had been, I would have set my signet on the biter.’

Heathcliff’s countenance relaxed into a grin.

‘Come, come,’ he said, ‘you are flurried, Mr. Lockwood. Here, take a little wine. Guests are so exceedingly rare in this house that I and my dogs, I am willing to own, hardly know how to receive them. Your health, sir!’

I bowed and returned the pledge; beginning to perceive that it would be foolish to sit sulking for the misbehaviour of a pack of curs: besides, I felt loath to yield the fellow further amusement at my expense; since his humour took that turn. He—probably swayed by prudential consideration of the folly of offending a good tenant—relaxed a little in the laconic style of chipping off his pronouns and auxiliary verbs, and introduced what he supposed would be a subject of interest to me,—a discourse on the advantages and disadvantages

of my present place of retirement. I found him very intelligent on the topics we touched ; and before I went home, I was encouraged so far as to volunteer another visit to-morrow. He evidently wished no repetition of my intrusion. I shall go, notwithstanding. It is astonishing how sociable I feel myself compared with him.

Yesterday afternoon set in misty and cold. I had half a mind to spend it by my study fire, instead of wading through heath and mud to Wuthering Heights. On coming up from dinner, however (N.B.—I dine between twelve and one o'clock ; the housekeeper, a matronly lady, taken as a fixture along with the house, could not, or would not, comprehend my request that I might be served at five), on mounting the stairs with this lazy intention, and stepping into the room, I saw a servant-girl on her knees surrounded by brushes and coal-scuttles, and raising an infernal dust as she extinguished the flames with heaps of cinders. This spectacle drove me back immediately ; I took my hat, and, after a four miles' walk, arrived at Heathcliff's garden gate just in time to escape the first feathery flakes of a snow-shower.

On that bleak hill-top the earth was hard with a black frost, and the air made me shiver through every limb. Being unable to remove the chain, I jumped over, and, running up the flagged causeway bordered with straggling gooseberry bushes, knocked vainly for admittance, till my knuckles tingled and the dogs howled.

'Wretched inmates !' I ejaculated mentally, 'you deserve perpetual isolation from your species for your churlish inhospitality. At least, I would

not keep my doors barred in the day-time. I don't care—I will get in !' So resolved, I grasped the latch and shook it vehemently. Vinegar-faced Joseph projected his head from a round window of the barn.

'What are ye for ?' he shouted. 'T' maister's down i' t' fowld. Go round by th' end ot' laith, if ye went to spake to him.'

'Is there nobody inside to open the door ?' I hallooed responsively.

'There's nobbut t' missis ; and shoo'll not oppen 't an ye mak yer flaysome dins till neeght.'

'Why ? Cannot you tell her who I am, eh, Joseph ?'

'Nor-ne me ! I'll hae no hend wi't,' muttered the head, vanishing.

The snow began to drive thickly. I seized the handle to essay another trial ; when a young man without coat, and shouldering a pitchfork, appeared in the yard behind. He hailed me to follow him, and, after marching through a wash-house, a paved area containing a coal-shed, pump, and pigeon-cot, we at length arrived in the huge, warm, cheerful apartment, where I was formerly received. It glowed delightfully in the radiance of an immense fire, compounded of coal, peat, and wood ; and near the table, laid for a plentiful evening meal, I was pleased to observe the 'missis', an individual whose existence I had never previously suspected. I bowed and waited, thinking she would bid me take a seat. She looked at me, leaning back in her chair, and remained motionless and mute.

'Rough weather !' I remarked. 'I'm afraid, Mrs. Heathcliff, the door must bear the consequence of your servants' leisure attendance : I had hard work to make them hear me.'

She never opened her mouth. I stared—she stared also : at any rate, she kept her eyes on me in a cool, regardless manner, exceedingly embarrassing and disagreeable.

‘Sit down,’ said the young man gruffly. ‘He’ll be in soon.’

I obeyed ; and hemmed, and called the villain Juno, who deigned, at this second interview, to move the extreme tip of her tail, in token of owning my acquaintance.

‘A beautiful animal !’ I commenced again. ‘Do you intend parting with the little ones, madam ?’

‘They are not mine,’ said the amiable hostess, more repellingly than Heathcliff himself could have replied.

‘Ah, your favourites are among these ?’ I continued, turning to an obscure cushion full of something like cats.

‘A strange choice of favourites !’ she observed scornfully.

Unluckily, it was a heap of dead rabbits. I hemmed once more, and drew closer to the hearth, repeating my comment on the wildness of the evening.

‘You should not have come out,’ she said, rising and reaching from the chimney-piece two of the painted canisters.

Her position before was sheltered from the light ; now, I had a distinct view of her whole figure and countenance. She was slender, and apparently scarcely past girlhood : an admirable form, and the most exquisite little face that I have ever had the pleasure of beholding ; small features, very fair ; flaxen ringlets, or rather golden, hanging

loose on her delicate neck ; and eyes, had they been agreeable in expression, that would have been irresistible : fortunately for my susceptible heart, the only sentiment they evinced hovered between scorn and a kind of desperation, singularly unnatural to be detected there. The canisters were almost out of her reach ; I made a motion to aid her ; she turned upon me as a miser might turn if any one attempted to assist him in counting his gold.

‘ I don’t want your help,’ she snapped ; ‘ I can get them for myself.’

‘ I beg your pardon ! ’ I hastened to reply.

‘ Were you asked to tea ? ’ she demanded, tying an apron over her neat black frock, and standing with a spoonful of the leaf poised over the pot.

‘ I shall be glad to have a cup,’ I answered.

‘ Were you asked ? ’ she repeated.

‘ No,’ I said, half smiling. ‘ You are the proper person to ask me.’

She flung the tea back, spoon and all, and resumed her chair in a pet ; her forehead corrugated, and her red under-lip pushed out, like a child’s ready to cry.

Meanwhile, the young man had slung on to his person a decidedly shabby upper garment, and, erecting himself before the blaze, looked down on me from the corner of his eyes, for all the world as if there were some mortal feud unavenged between us. I began to doubt whether he were a servant or not : his dress and speech were both rude, entirely devoid of the superiority observable in Mr. and Mrs. Heathcliff ; his thick, brown curls were rough and uncultivated, his whiskers

encroached bearishly over his cheeks, and his hands were embrowned like those of a common labourer: still his bearing was free, almost haughty, and he showed none of a domestic's assiduity in attending on the lady of the house. In the absence of clear proofs of his condition, I deemed it best to abstain from noticing his curious conduct; and, five minutes afterwards, the entrance of Heathcliff relieved me, in some measure, from my uncomfortable state.

'You see, sir, I am come, according to promise!' I exclaimed, assuming the cheerful; 'and I fear I shall be weather-bound for half an hour, if you can afford me shelter during that space.'

'Half an hour?' he said, shaking the white flakes from his clothes; 'I wonder you should select the thick of a snow-storm to ramble about in. Do you know that you run a risk of being lost in the marshes? People familiar with these moors often miss their road on such evenings; and I can tell you there is no chance of a change at present.'

'Perhaps I can get a guide among your lads, and he might stay at the Grange till morning—could you spare me one?'

'No, I could not.'

'Oh, indeed! Well, then, I must trust to my own sagacity.'

'Umph!'

'Are you going to mak' th' tea?' demanded he of the shabby coat, shifting his ferocious gaze from me to the young lady.

'Is *he* to have any?' she asked, appealing to Heathcliff.

'Get it ready, will you?' was the answer,

uttered so savagely that I started. The tone in which the words were said revealed a genuine bad nature. I no longer felt inclined to call Heathcliff a capital fellow. When the preparations were finished, he invited me with—‘Now, sir, bring forward your chair.’ And we all, including the rustic youth, drew round the table: an austere silence prevailing while we discussed our meal.

I thought, if I had caused the cloud, it was my duty to make an effort to dispel it. They could not every day sit so grim and taciturn; and it was impossible, however ill-tempered they might be, that the universal scowl they wore was their everyday countenance.

‘It is strange,’ I began, in the interval of swallowing one cup of tea and receiving another—‘it is strange how custom can mould our tastes and ideas: many could not imagine the existence of happiness in a life of such complete exile from the world as you spend, Mr. Heathcliff; yet, I’ll venture to say, that, surrounded by your family, and with your amiable lady as the presiding genius over your home and heart——’

‘My amiable lady!’ he interrupted, with an almost diabolical sneer on his face. ‘Where is she—my amiable lady?’

‘Mrs. Heathcliff, your wife, I mean.’

‘Well, yes—Oh, you would intimate that her spirit has taken the post of ministering angel, and guards the fortunes of Wuthering Heights even when her body is gone. Is that it?’

Perceiving myself in a blunder, I attempted to correct it. I might have seen there was too great a disparity between the ages of the parties to make it likely that they were man and wife. One

was about forty ; a period of mental vigour at which men seldom cherish the delusion of being married for love by girls : that dream is reserved for the solace of our declining years. The other did not look seventeen.

Then it flashed upon me—‘The clown at my elbow, who is drinking his tea out of a basin and eating his bread with unwashed hands, may be her husband : Heathcliff junior, of course. Here is the consequence of being buried alive : she has thrown herself away upon that boqr from sheer ignorance that better individuals existed ! A sad pity—I must beware how I cause her to regret her choice.’ The last reflection may seem conceited ; it was not. My neighbour struck me as bordering on repulsive ; I knew, through experience, that I was tolerably attractive.

‘Mrs. Heathcliff is my daughter-in-law,’ said Heathcliff, corroborating my surmise. He turned, as he spoke, a peculiar look in her direction : a look of hatred ; unless he has a most perverse set of facial muscles that will not, like those of other people, interpret the language of his soul.

‘Ah, certainly—I see now : you are the favoured possessor of the beneficent fairy,’ I remarked, turning to my neighbour.

This was worse than before : the youth grew crimson, and clenched his fist, with every appearance of a meditated assault. But he seemed to recollect himself presently, and smothered the storm in a brutal curse, muttered on my behalf : which, however, I took care not to notice.

‘Unhappy in your conjectures, sir,’ observed my host ; ‘we neither of us have the privilege of owning your good fairy ; her mate is dead. I said

she was my daughter-in-law, therefore she must have married my son.'

'And this young man is——'

'Not my son, assuredly.'

Heathcliff smiled again, as if it were rather too bold a jest to attribute the paternity of that bear to him.

'My name is Hareton Earnshaw,' growled the other; 'and I'd counsel you to respect it!'

'I've shown no disrespect,' was my reply, laughing internally at the dignity with which he announced himself.

He fixed his eye on me longer than I cared to return the stare, for fear I might be tempted either to box his ears or render my hilarity audible. I began to feel unmistakably out of place in that pleasant family circle. The dismal spiritual atmosphere overcame, and more than neutralized, the glowing physical comforts round me; and I resolved to be cautious how I ventured under those rafters a third time.

The business of eating being concluded, and no one uttering a word of sociable conversation, I approached a window to examine the weather. A sorrowful sight I saw: dark night coming down prematurely, and sky and hills mingled in one bitter whirl of wind and suffocating snow.

'I don't think it possible for me to get home now without a guide,' I could not help exclaiming. 'The roads will be buried already; and, if they were bare, I could scarcely distinguish a foot in advance.'

'Hareton, drive those dozen sheep into the barn porch. They'll be covered if left in the fold all night: and put a plank before them,' said Heathcliff.

‘How must I do?’ I continued, with rising irritation.

There was no reply to my question; and on looking round I saw only Joseph bringing in a pail of porridge for the dogs, and Mrs. Heathcliff leaning over the fire, diverting herself with burning a bundle of matches which had fallen from the chimney-piece as she restored the tea-canister to its place. The former, when he had deposited his burden, took a critical survey of the room, and in cracked tones grated out—

‘Aw wonder how yah can faishion to stand thear i’ idleness un war, when all on ’em ’s goan out! Bud yah ’re a nowt, and it’s no use talking—yah ’ll niver mend o’ yer ill ways, but goa raight to t’ divil, like yer mother afore ye!’

I imagined, for a moment, that this piece of eloquence was addressed to me; and, sufficiently enraged, stepped towards the aged rascal with an intention of kicking him out of the door. Mrs. Heathcliff, however, checked me by her answer.

‘You scandalous old hypocrite!’ she replied. ‘Are you not afraid of being carried away bodily, whenever you mention the devil’s name? I warn you to refrain from provoking me, or I’ll ask your abduction as a special favour. Stop! look here, Joseph,’ she continued, taking a long, dark book from a shelf; ‘I’ll show you how far I’ve progressed in the Black Art: I shall soon be competent to make a clear house of it. The red cow didn’t die by chance; and your rheumatism can hardly be reckoned among providential visitations!’

‘Oh, wicked, wicked!’ gasped the elder; ‘may the Lord deliver us from evil!’

‘No, reprobate! you are a castaway—be off, or

I'll hurt you seriously ! I'll have you all modelled in wax and clay ; and the first who passes the limits I fix, shall—I'll not say what he shall be done to—but, you'll see ! Go, I'm looking at you !'

The little witch put a mock malignity into her beautiful eyes, and Joseph, trembling with sincere horror, hurried out praying and ejaculating 'wicked' as he went. I thought her conduct must be prompted by a species of dreary fun ; and, now that we were alone, I endeavoured to interest her in my distress.

'Mrs. Heathcliff,' I said earnestly, 'you must excuse me for troubling you. I presume, because, with that face, I'm sure you cannot help being good-hearted. Do point out some landmarks by which I may know my way home : I have no more idea how to get there than you would have how to get to London !'

'Take the road you came,' she answered, ensconcing herself in a chair, with a candle, and the long book open before her. 'It is brief advice, but as sound as I can give.'

'Then, if you hear of me being discovered dead in a bog or a pit full of snow, your conscience won't whisper that it is partly your fault ?'

'How so ? I cannot escort you. They wouldn't let me go to the end of the garden-wall.'

'*You !* I should be sorry to ask you to cross the threshold, for my convenience, on such a night,' I cried. 'I want you to *tell* me my way, not to *show* it ; or else to persuade Mr. Heathcliff to give me a guide.'

'Who ? There is himself, Earnshaw, Zillah, Joseph, and I. Which would you have ?'

'Are there no boys at the farm ?'

‘No ; those are all.’

‘Then, it follows that I am compelled to stay.’

‘That you may settle with your host. I have nothing to do with it.’

‘I hope it will be a lesson to you to make no more rash journeys on these hills,’ cried Heathcliff’s stern voice from the kitchen entrance. ‘As to staying here, I don’t keep accommodations for visitors : you must share a bed with Hareton or Joseph, if you do.’

‘I can sleep on a chair in this room,’ I replied.

‘No, no ! A stranger is a stranger, be he rich or poor : it will not suit me to permit any one the range of the place while I am off guard !’ said the unmannerly wretch.

With this insult, my patience was at an end. I uttered an expression of disgust, and pushed past him into the yard, running against Earnshaw in my haste. It was so dark that I could not see the means of exit ; and, as I wandered round, I heard another specimen of their civil behaviour amongst each other. At first the young man appeared about to befriend me.

‘I’ll go with him as far as the park,’ he said.

‘You’ll go with him to hell !’ exclaimed his master, or whatever relation he bore. ‘And who is to look after the horses, eh ?’

‘A man’s life is of more consequence than one evening’s neglect of the horses : somebody must go,’ murmured Mrs. Heathcliff, more kindly than I expected.

‘Not at your command !’ retorted Hareton.

‘If you set store on him, you’d better be quiet.’

‘Then I hope his ghost will haunt you ; and I hope Mr. Heathcliff will never get another

tenant till the Grange is a ruin !' she answered sharply.

'Hearken, hearken, shoo's cursing on 'em !' muttered Joseph, towards whom I had been steering.

He sat within earshot, milking the cows by the light of a lantern, which I seized unceremoniously, and, calling out that I would send it back on the morrow, rushed to the nearest postern.

'Maister, maister, he's staling t' lantern !' shouted the ancient, pursuing my retreat. 'Hey, Gnasher ! Hey, dog ! Hey, Wolf, holld him, holld him !'

On opening the little door, two hairy monsters flew at my throat, bearing me down and extinguishing the light ; while a mingled guffaw from Heathcliff and Hareton put the copestone on my rage and humiliation. Fortunately, the beasts seemed more bent on stretching their paws and yawning, and flourishing their tails, than devouring me alive ; but they would suffer no resurrection, and I was forced to lie till their malignant masters pleased to deliver me : then, hatless and trembling with wrath, I ordered the miscreants to let me out—on their peril to keep me one minute longer—with several incoherent threats of retaliation that, in their indefinite depth of virulency, smacked of King Lear.

The vehemence of my agitation brought on a copious bleeding at the nose, and still Heathcliff laughed, and still I scolded. I don't know what would have concluded the scene, had there not been one person at hand rather more rational than myself, and more benevolent than my entertainer. This was Zillah, the stout housewife ; who at

length issued forth to inquire into the nature of the uproar. She thought that some of them had been laying violent hands on me ; and, not daring to attack her master, she turned her vocal artillery against the younger scoundrel.

‘ Well, Mr. Earnshaw,’ she cried, ‘ I wonder what you’ll have agait next ! Are we going to murder folk on our very door-stones ? I see this house will never do for me—look at t’ poor lad, he ’s fair choking ! Wisht, wisht ! you mun’n’t go on so. Come in, and I’ll cure that : there now, hold ye still.’

With these words she suddenly splashed a pint of icy water down my neck, and pulled me into the kitchen. Mr. Heathcliff followed, his accidental merriment expiring quickly in his habitual moroseness.

I was sick exceedingly, and dizzy and faint ; and thus compelled perforce to accept lodgings under his roof. He told Zillah to give me a glass of brandy, and then passed on to the inner room ; while she condoled with me on my sorry predicament, and having obeyed his orders, whereby I was somewhat revived, ushered me to bed.—*Wuthering Heights.*

#### DEATH OF HEATHCLIFF

THE hours crept anxiously by : another evening came. I [Mrs. Dean] did not retire to rest till late, and when I did, I could not sleep. He returned after midnight, and, instead of going to bed, shut himself into the room beneath. I listened, and tossed about, and, finally, dressed and descended. It was too irksome to lie there, harassing my brain with a hundred idle misgivings.

I distinguished Mr. Heathcliff's step, restlessly measuring the floor, and he frequently broke the silence by a deep inspiration, resembling a groan. He muttered detached words also ; the only one I could catch was the name of Catherine, coupled with some wild term of endearment or suffering ; and spoken as one would speak to a person present : low and earnest, and wrung from the depth of his soul. I had not courage to walk straight into the apartment ; but I desired to divert him from his reverie, and therefore fell foul of the kitchen fire, stirred it, and began to scrape the cinders. It drew him forth sooner than I expected. He opened the door immediately and said—

‘Nelly, come here—is it morning ? Come in with your light.’

‘It is striking four,’ I answered. ‘You want a candle to take upstairs : you might have lit one at this fire.’

‘No, I don't wish to go upstairs,’ he said. ‘Come in, and kindle *me* a fire, and do anything there is to do about the room.’

‘I must blow the coals red first before I can carry any,’ I replied, getting a chair and the bellows.

He roamed to and fro, meantime, in a state approaching distraction ; his heavy sighs succeeding each other so thick as to leave no space for common breathing between.

‘When day breaks I'll send for Green,’ he said ; ‘I wish to make some legal inquiries of him while I can bestow a thought on those matters, and while I can act calmly. I have not written my will yet ; and how to leave my property I cannot determine. I wish I could annihilate it from the face of the earth.’

‘I would not talk so, Mr. Heathcliff,’ I interposed. ‘Let your will be a while : you’ll be spared to repent of your many injustices yet ! I never expected that your nerves would be disordered : they are, at present, marvellously so, however ; and almost entirely through your own fault. The way you’ve passed these three last days might knock up a Titan. Do take some food, and some repose. You need only look at yourself in a glass to see how you require both. Your cheeks are hollow, and your eyes bloodshot, like a person starving with hunger and going blind with loss of sleep.’

‘It is not my fault, that I cannot eat or rest,’ he replied. ‘I assure you it is through no settled designs. I’ll do both, as soon as I possibly can. But you might as well bid a man struggling in the water rest within arm’s length of the shore ! I must reach it first, and then I’ll rest. Well, never mind Mr. Green : as to repenting of my injustices, I’ve done no injustice, and I repent of nothing. I’m too happy ; and yet I’m not happy enough. My soul’s bliss kills my body, but does not satisfy itself.’

‘Happy, master ?’ I cried. ‘Strange happiness ! If you would hear me without being angry, I might offer some advice that would make you happier.’

‘What is that ?’ he asked. ‘Give it.’

‘You are aware, Mr. Heathcliff,’ I said, ‘that from the time you were thirteen years old, you have lived a selfish, unchristian life ; and probably hardly had a Bible in your hands during all that period. You must have forgotten the contents of the book, and you may not have space to search it now. Could it be hurtful to send for some one—

some minister of any denomination, it does not matter which—to explain it, and show you how very far you have erred from its precepts; and how unfit you will be for its heaven, unless a change takes place before you die?’

‘I’m rather obliged than angry, Nelly,’ he said, ‘for you remind me of the manner in which I desire to be buried. It is to be carried to the churchyard in the evening. You and Hareton may, if you please, accompany me: and mind, particularly, to notice that the sexton obeys my directions concerning the two coffins! No minister need come; nor need anything be said over me.—I tell you, I have nearly attained *my* heaven; and that of others is altogether unvalued and uncoveted by me.’

‘And supposing you persevered in your obstinate fast, and died by that means, and they refused to bury you in the precincts of the kirk?’ I said, shocked at his godless indifference. ‘How would you like it?’

‘They won’t do that,’ he replied: ‘if they did, you must have me removed secretly; and if you neglect it, you shall prove, practically, that the dead are not annihilated!’

As soon as he heard the other members of the family stirring he retired to his den, and I breathed freer. But in the afternoon, while Joseph and Hareton were at their work, he came into the kitchen again, and with a wild look, bid me come and sit in the house; he wanted somebody with him. I declined; telling him plainly that his strange talk and manner frightened me, and I had neither the nerve nor the will to be his companion alone.

‘I believe you think me a fiend,’ he said, with his dismal laugh: ‘something too horrible to live

under a decent roof.' Then turning to Catherine, who was there, and who drew behind me at his approach, he added, half sneeringly—'Will *you* come, chuck? I'll not hurt you. No! to you I've made myself worse than the devil. Well, there is *one* who won't shrink from my company! By God! she's relentless. Oh, damn it! It's unutterably too much for flesh and blood to bear—even mine.'

He solicited the society of no one more. At dusk, he went into his chamber. Through the whole night, and far into the morning, we heard him groaning and murmuring to himself. Hareton was anxious to enter; but I bid him fetch Mr. Kenneth, and he should go in and see him. When he came, and I requested admittance and tried to open the door, I found it locked; and Heathcliff bid us be damned. He was better, and would be left alone; so the doctor went away.

The following evening was very wet: indeed it poured down till day-dawn; and, as I took my morning walk round the house, I observed the master's window swinging open, and the rain driving straight in. 'He cannot be in bed,' I thought: 'those showers would drench him through. He must either be up or out. But I'll make no more ado, I'll go boldly and look.'

Having succeeded in obtaining entrance with another key, I ran to unclosethe panels, for the chamber was vacant; quickly pushing them aside, I peeped in. Mr. Heathcliff was there—laid on his back. His eyes met mine so keen and fierce, I started; and then he seemed to smile. I could not think him dead: but his face and throat were washed with rain; the bed-clothes dripped, and he

was perfectly still. The lattice, flapping to and fro, had grazed one hand that rested on the sill ; no blood trickled from the broken skin, and when I put my fingers to it, I could doubt no more : he was dead and stark !

I hasped the window ; I combed his black long hair from his forehead ; I tried to close his eyes : to extinguish, if possible, that frightful, life-like gaze of exultation, before any one else beheld it. They would not shut : they seemed to sneer at my attempts ; and his parted lips and sharp, white teeth sneered too ! Taken with another fit of cowardice, I cried out for Joseph. Joseph shuffled up and made a noise, but resolutely refused to meddle with him.

‘Th’ divil’s harried off his soul,’ he cried, ‘and he may hev his carcass into t’ bargain, for aught I care ! Ech ! what a wicked ’un he looks girning at death !’ and the old sinner grinned in mockery. I thought he intended to cut a caper round the bed ; but suddenly composing himself, he fell on his knees, and raised his hands, and returned thanks that the lawful master and the ancient stock were restored to their rights.

I felt stunned by the awful event ; and my memory unavoidably recurred to former times with a sort of oppressive sadness. But poor Hareton, the most wronged, was the only one who really suffered much. He sat by the corpse all night, weeping in bitter earnest. He pressed its hand, and kissed the sarcastic, savage face that every one else shrank from contemplating ; and bemoaned him with that strong grief which springs naturally from a generous heart, though it be tough as tempered steel.

Mr. Kenneth was perplexed to pronounce of

what disorder the master died. I concealed the fact of his having swallowed nothing for four days, fearing it might lead to trouble, and then, I am persuaded, he did not abstain on purpose: it was the consequence of his strange illness, not the cause.

We buried him, to the scandal of the whole neighbourhood, as he wished. Earnshaw and I, the sexton, and six men to carry the coffin, comprehended the whole attendance. The six men departed when they had let it down into the grave: we stayed to see it covered. Hareton, with a streaming face, dug green sods, and laid them over the brown mould himself: at present it is as smooth and verdant as its companion mounds—and I hope its tenant sleeps as soundly. But the country folks, if you ask them, would swear on the Bible that he *walks*: there are those who speak to having met him near the church, and on the moor, and even within this house. Idle tales, you'll say, and so say I. Yet that old man by the kitchen fire affirms he has seen two on 'em, looking out of his chamber window, on every rainy night since his death:—and an odd thing happened to me about a month ago. I was going to the Grange one evening—a dark evening, threatening thunder—and, just at the turn of the Heights, I encountered a little boy with a sheep and two lambs before him; he was crying terribly; and I supposed the lambs were skittish, and would not be guided.

‘What is the matter, my little man?’ I asked.

‘There's Heathcliff and a woman, yonder, under t' Nab,’ he blubbered, ‘un' I darnut pass 'em.’

I saw nothing; but neither the sheep nor he would go on; so I bid him take the road lower

down. He probably raised the phantoms from thinking, as he traversed the moors alone, on the nonsense he had heard his parents and companions repeat. Yet, still, I don't like being out in the dark now; and I don't like being left by myself in this grim house: I cannot help it; I shall be glad when they leave it, and shift to the Grange.—  
*Wuthering Heights.*

## JAMES ANTHONY FROUDE

1818-94

### THE EARLY PROTESTANTS

#### (i) A PUBLIC PENANCE

SIMULTANEOUSLY the English universities fell under examination, in consequence of the appearance of dangerous symptoms among the younger students. Dr. Barnes, returning from the continent, had used violent language in a pulpit at Cambridge; and Latimer, then a neophyte in heresy, had grown suspect, and had alarmed the heads of houses. Complaints against both of them were forwarded to Wolsey, and they were summoned to London to answer for themselves.

Latimer, for some cause, found favour with the cardinal, and was dismissed, with a hope on the part of his judge that his accusers might prove as honest as he appeared to be, and even with a general licence to preach. Barnes was less fortunate; he was far inferior to Latimer; a noisy, unwise man, without reticence or prudence. In addition to his offences in matters of doctrine, he had attacked Wolsey himself with somewhat vulgar personality;

and it was thought well to single him out for a public, though not a very terrible, admonition. His house had been searched for books, which he was suspected, and justly suspected, of having brought with him from abroad. These, however, through a timely warning of the danger, had been happily secreted, or it might have gone harder with him. As it was, he was committed to the Fleet on the charge of having used heretical language. An abjuration was drawn up by Wolsey, which he signed ; and while he remained in prison preparations were made for a ceremony, in which he was to bear a part, in St. Paul's church, by which the Catholic authorities hoped to produce some salutary effect on the disaffected spirits of London.

Vast quantities of Tyndal's publications had been collected by the police. The bishops, also, had subscribed among themselves to buy up the copies of the New Testament before they left Antwerp ;—an unpromising method, like an attempt to extinguish fire by pouring oil upon it ; they had been successful, however, in obtaining a large immediate harvest, and a pyramid of offending volumes' was ready to be consumed in a solemn *auto da fé*.

In the morning of Shrove Sunday, then, 1527, we are to picture to ourselves a procession moving along London streets from the Fleet prison to St. Paul's Cathedral. The warden of the Fleet was there, and the knight marshal, and the tipstaffs, and 'all the company they could make', 'with bills and glaives' ; and in the midst of these armed officials, six men marching in penitential dresses, one carrying a lighted taper five pounds' weight,

the others with symbolic faggots, signifying to the lookers-on the fate which their crimes had earned for them, but which this time, in mercy, was remitted. One of these was Barnes; the other five were 'Stillyard men', undistinguishable by any other name, but detected members of the brotherhood.

It was eight o'clock when they arrived at St. Paul's. The people had flocked in crowds before them. The public seats and benches were filled. All London had hurried to the spectacle. A platform was erected in the centre of the nave, on the top of which, enthroned in pomp of purple and gold and splendour, sate the great cardinal, supported on each side with eighteen bishops, mitred abbots, and priors—six-and-thirty in all; his chaplains and 'spiritual doctors' sitting also where they could find place, 'in gowns of damask and satin'. Opposite the platform, over the north door of the cathedral, was a great crucifix—a famous image, in those days called the Rood of Northen; and at the foot of it, inside a rail, a fire was burning, with the sinful books, the Tracts and Testaments, ranged round it in baskets, waiting for the execution of sentence.

Such was the scene into the midst of which the six prisoners entered. A second platform stood in a conspicuous place in front of the cardinal's throne, where they could be seen and heard by the crowd; and there upon their knees, with their faggots on their shoulders, they begged pardon of God and the Holy Catholic Church for their high crimes and offences. When the confession was finished, Fisher, Bishop of Rochester, preached a sermon: and the sermon over, Barnes turned to

the people, declaring that ' he was more charitably handled than he deserved, his heresies were so heinous and detestable '.

There was no other religious service : mass had perhaps been said previous to the admission into the church of heretics lying under censure ; and the knight marshal led the prisoners down from the stage to the fire underneath the crucifix. They were taken within the rails, and three times led round the blazing pile, casting in their faggots as they passed. The contents of the baskets were heaped upon the faggots, and the holocaust was complete. This time, an unbloody sacrifice was deemed sufficient. The Church was satisfied with penance, and Fisher pronounced the prisoners absolved, and received back into communion.

So ended this strange exhibition, designed to work great results on the consciences of the spectators. It may be supposed, however, that men whom the tragedies of Smithfield failed to terrify, were not likely to be affected deeply by melodrama and blazing paper.

*History of England.*

## (ii) STORY OF A GROUP OF STUDENTS AT OXFORD

A story follows of far deeper human interest, a story in which the persecution is mirrored with its true lights and shadows, unexaggerated by rhetoric ; and which, in its minute simplicity, brings us face to face with that old world, where men like ourselves lived, and worked, and suffered, three centuries ago.

Two years before the time at which we have now arrived, Wolsey, in pursuance of his scheme of converting the endowments of the religious houses

to purposes of education, had obtained permission from the Pope to suppress a number of the smaller monasteries. He had added largely to the means thus placed at his disposal from his own resources, and had founded the great college at Oxford, which is now called Christ Church. Desiring his magnificent institution to be as perfect as art could make it, he had sought his professors in Rome, in the Italian universities, wherever genius or ability could be found; and he had introduced into the foundation several students from Cambridge, who had been reported to him as being of unusual promise. Frith, of whom we have heard, was one of these. Of the rest, John Clark, Sumner, and Taverner are the most noticeable. At the time at which they were invited to Oxford, they were tainted, or some of them were tainted, in the eyes of the Cambridge authorities, with suspicion of heterodoxy; and it is creditable to Wolsey's liberality, that he set aside these unsubstantiated rumours, not allowing them to weigh against ability, industry, and character. The Church authorities thought only of crushing what opposed them, especially of crushing talent, because talent was dangerous. Wolsey's noble anxiety was to court talent, and if possible to win it.

The young Cambridge students, however, ill repaid his confidence (so, at least, it must have appeared to him), and introduced into Oxford the rising epidemic. Clark, as was at last discovered, was in the habit of reading St. Paul's Epistles to young men in his rooms; and a gradually increasing circle of undergraduates, of three or four years' standing, from various colleges, formed themselves into a spiritual freemasonry, some of

them passionately insisting on being admitted to the lectures, in spite of warnings from Clark himself, whose wiser foresight knew the risk which they were running, and shrank from allowing weak giddy spirits to thrust themselves into so fearful peril.

This little party had been in the habit of meeting for about six months, when at Easter, 1527, Thomas Garret, a fellow of Magdalen, who had gone out of residence, and was curate at All Hallows Church, in London, re-appeared in Oxford. Garret was a secret member of the London Society, and had come down, at Clark's instigation, to feel his way in the university. So excellent a beginning had already been made, that he had only to improve upon it. He sought out all such young men as were given to Greek, Hebrew, and the polite Latin; and in this visit met with so much encouragement, that the Christmas following he returned again, this time bringing with him treasures of forbidden books, imported by 'the Christian Brothers', New Testaments, tracts and volumes of German divinity, which he sold privately among the initiated.

He lay concealed, with his store, at 'the house of one Radley', the position of which cannot now be identified; and there he remained for several weeks, unsuspected by the university authorities, till orders were sent by Wolsey to the Dean of Christ Church for his arrest. Precise information was furnished at the same time respecting himself, his mission in Oxford, and his place of concealment.

The proctors were put upon the scent, and directed to take him; but one of them, Arthur

Cole, of Magdalen, by name, not from any sympathy with Garret's objects, as the sequel proved, but probably from old acquaintance, for they were fellows at the same college, gave him information of his danger, and warned him to escape.

His young friends, more alarmed for their companion than for themselves, held a meeting instantly to decide what should be done ; and at this meeting was Anthony Dalaber, an undergraduate of Alban Hall, and one of Clark's pupils, who will now tell the story of what followed.

'The Christmas before that time, I, Anthony Dalaber, the scholar of Alban Hall, who had books of Master Garret, had been in my country, at Dorsetshire, at Stalbridge, where I had a brother, parson of this parish, who was very desirous to have a curate out of Oxford, and willed me in any wise to get him one there, if I could. This just occasion offered, it was thought good among the brethren (for so we did not only call one another, but were indeed one to another) that Master Garret, changing his name, should be sent forth with my letters into Dorsetshire, to my brother, to serve him there for a time, until he might secretly convey himself from thence some whither over the sea. According hereunto I wrote my letters in all haste possible unto my brother, for Master Garret to be his curate ; but not declaring what he was indeed, for my brother was a rank papist, and afterwards was the most mortal enemy that ever I had, for the Gospel's sake.

'So on Wednesday (Feb. 18), in the morning before Shrovetide, Master Garret departed out of Oxford towards Dorsetshire, with my letter, for his new service.'

The most important person being thus, as was supposed, safe from immediate danger, Dalaber was at leisure to think a little about himself; and supposing, naturally, that the matter would not end there, and that some change of residence might be of advantage for his own security, he moved off from Alban Hall (as undergraduates it seems were then at liberty to do) to Gloucester College, under pretence that he desired to study civil law, for which no facilities existed at the hall. This little matter was effected on the Thursday; and all Friday and Saturday morning he 'was so much busied in setting his poor stuff in order, his bed, his books, and such things else as he had', that he had no leisure to go forth anywhere those two days, Friday and Saturday.

'Having set up my things handsomely,' he continues, 'the same day, before noon, I determined to spend that whole afternoon, until evensong time, at Frideswide College, at my book in mine own study; and so shut my chamber door unto me, and my study door also, and took into my head to read Francis Lambert upon the Gospel of St. Luke, which book only I had then within there. All my other books written on the Scriptures, of which I had great numbers, I had left in my chamber at Alban's Hall, where I had made a very secret place to keep them safe in, because it was so dangerous to have any such books. And so, as I was diligently reading in the same book of Lambert upon Luke, suddenly one knocked at my chamber door very hard, which made me astonished, and yet I sat still and would not speak; then he knocked again more hard, and yet I held my peace; and straightway he knocked again yet more

fiercely ; and then I thought this : peradventure it is somebody that hath need of me ; and therefore I thought myself bound to do as I would be done unto ; and so, laying my book aside, I came to the door and opened it, and there was Master Garret, as a man amazed, whom I thought to have been with my brother and one with him.'

Garret had set out on his expedition into Dorsetshire, but had been frightened, and had stolen back into Oxford on the Friday, to his old hiding-place, where, in the middle of the night, the proctors had taken him. He had been carried to Lincoln, and shut up in a room in the rector's house, where he had been left all day. In the afternoon the rector went to chapel ; no one was stirring about the college, and he had taken advantage of the opportunity to slip the bolt of the door and escape. He had a friend at Gloucester College, 'a monk who had bought books of him ;' and Gloucester lying on the outskirts of the town, he had hurried down there as the readiest place of shelter. The monk was out ; and as no time was to be lost, Garret asked the servant on the staircase to show him Dalaber's rooms.

As soon as the door was opened, 'he said he was undone, for he was taken.' 'Thus he spake unadvisedly in the presence of the young man, who at once slipped down the stairs,' it was to be feared, on no good errand. 'Then I said to him,' Dalaber goes on, 'alas, Master Garret, by this your uncircumspect coming here and speaking so before the young man, you have disclosed yourself and utterly undone me. I asked him why he was not in Dorsetshire. He said he had gone a day's journey and a half ; but he was so fearful, his heart would none

other but that he must needs return again unto Oxford. With deep sighs and plenty of tears, he prayed me to help to convey him away ; and so he cast off his hood and gown wherein he came to me, and desired me to give him a coat with sleeves, if I had any ; and he told me that he would go into Wales, and thence convey himself, if he might, into Germany. Then I put on him a sleeved coat of mine. He would also have had another manner of cap of me, but I had none but priestlike, such as his own was.

‘ Then kneeled we both down together upon our knees, and lifting up our hearts and hands to God our heavenly Father, desired Him, with plenty of tears, so to conduct and prosper him in his journey, that he might well escape the danger of all his enemies, to the glory of His Holy Name, if His good pleasure and will so were. And then we embraced and kissed the one the other, the tears so abundantly flowing out from both our eyes, that we all bewet both our faces, and scarcely for sorrow could we speak one to another. And so he departed from me, apparelled in my coat, being committed unto the tuition of our Almighty and merciful Father.

‘ When he was gone down the stairs from my chamber, I straightways did shut my chamber door, and went into my study ; and taking the New Testament in my hands, kneeled down on my knees, and with many a deep sigh and salt tear, I did, with much deliberation, read over the tenth chapter of St. Matthew’s Gospel, praying that God would endue His tender and lately-born little flock in Oxford with heavenly strength by His Holy Spirit ; that quietly to their own salvation, with

all godly patience, they might bear Christ's heavy cross, which I now saw was presently to be laid on their young and weak backs, unable to bear so huge a burden without the great help of His Holy Spirit.

' This done, I laid aside my book safe, folded up Master Garret's gown and hood, and so, having put on my short gown, and shut my doors, I went towards Frideswide (Christ Church), to speak with that worthy martyr of God, Master Clark. But of purpose I went by St. Mary's church, to go first unto Corpus Christi College, to speak with Diet and Udal, my faithful brethren and fellows in the Lord. By chance I met by the way a brother of ours, one Master Eden, fellow of Magdalen, who, as soon as he saw me, said, we were all undone, for Master Garret was returned, and was in prison. I said it was not so ; he said it was. I heard, quoth he, our Proctor, Master Cole, say and declare the same this day. Then I told him what was done ; and so made haste to Frideswide, to find Master Clark, for I thought that he and others would be in great sorrow.

' Evensong was begun ; the dean and the canons were there in their grey amices ; they were almost at Magnificat before I came thither. I stood in the choir door and heard Master Taverner play, and others of the chapel there sing, with and among whom I myself was wont to sing also ; but now my singing and music were turned into sighing and musing. As I there stood, in cometh Dr. Cottisford, the commissary, as fast as ever he could go, bareheaded, as pale as ashes (I knew his grief well enough) ; and to the dean he goeth into the choir, where he was sitting in his stall, and talked with him, very sorrowfully : what, I know not ; but

whereof I might and did truly guess. I went aside from the choir door to see and hear more. The commissary and dean came out of the choir, wonderfully troubled as it seemed. About the middle of the church met them Dr. London, puffing, blustering, and blowing like a hungry and greedy lion seeking his prey. They talked together, awhile ; but the commissary was much blamed by them, insomuch that he wept for sorrow.

‘ The doctors departed, and sent abroad their servants and spies everywhere. Master Clark, about the middle of the compline, came forth of the choir. I followed him to his chamber, and declared what had happened that afternoon of Master Garret’s escape. Then he sent for one Master Sumner and Master Bets, fellows and canons there. In the meantime he gave me a very godly exhortation, praying God to give us all the wisdom of the serpent and the harmlessness of doves, for we should shortly have much need thereof. When Master Sumner and Master Bets came, he caused me to declare again the whole matter to them two. Then desiring them to tell our other brethren in that college, I went to Corpus Christi College, to comfort our brethren there, where I found in Diet’s chamber, looking for me, Fitzjames, Diet, and Udal. They all knew the matter before by Master Eden, whom I had sent unto Fitzjames. So I tarried there and supped with them, where they had provided meat and drink for us before my coming ; and when we had ended, Fitzjames would needs have me to lie that night with him in my old lodging at Alban’s Hall. But small rest and little sleep took we both there that night.’

The next day, which was Sunday, Dalaher rose

at five o'clock, and as soon as he could leave the Hall, hastened off to his rooms at Gloucester. The night had been wet and stormy, and his shoes and stockings were covered with mud. The college gates, when he reached them, were still closed, an unusual thing at that hour ; and he walked up and down under the walls in the bleak grey morning, till the clock struck seven, ' much disquieted, his head full of forecasting cares,' but resolved, like a brave man, that come what would, he would accuse no one, and declare nothing but what he saw was already known. The gates were at last opened ; he went to his rooms, and for some time his key would not turn in the door, the lock having been meddled with. At length he succeeded in entering, and found everything in confusion, his bed tossed and tumbled, his study door open, and his clothes strewed about the floor. A monk who occupied the opposite rooms, hearing him return, came to him and said that the commissary and the two proctors had been there looking for Garret. Bills and swords had been thrust through the bed-straw, and every corner of the room searched for him. Finding nothing, they had left orders that Dalaber, as soon as he returned, should appear before the prior of the students.

' This so troubled me,' Dalaber says, ' that I forgot to make clean my hose and shoes, and to shift me into another gown ; and all bedirted as I was, I went to the said prior's chamber.' The prior asked him where he had slept that night. At Alban's Hall, he answered, with his old bed-fellow, Fitzjames. The prior said he did not believe him, and asked if Garret had been at his rooms the day before. He replied that he had.

Whither had he gone, then ? the prior inquired ; and where was he at that time ? ‘ I answered,’ says Dalaber, ‘ that I knew not, unless he was gone to Woodstock ; he told me that he would go there, because one of the keepers had promised him a piece of venison to make merry with at Shrovetide. This tale I thought meetest, though it were nothing so.’

At this moment the university beadle entered with two of the commissary’s servants, bringing a message to the prior that he should repair at once to Lincoln, taking Dalaber with him. ‘ I was brought into the chapel,’ the latter continues, ‘ and there I found Dr. Cottisford, commissary ; Dr. Higdon, Dean of Cardinal’s College ; and Dr. London, Warden of New College ; standing together at the altar. They called for chairs and sat down, and then [ordered] me to come to them ; they asked me what my name was, how long I had been at the university, what I studied,’ with various other inquiries : the clerk of the university, meanwhile, bringing pens, ink, and paper, and arranging a table with a few loose boards upon tressels. A mass book, he says, was then placed before him, and he was commanded to lay his hand upon it, and swear that he would answer truly such questions as should be asked him. At first he refused ; but afterwards, being persuaded, ‘ partly by fair words, and partly by great threats,’ he promised to do as they would have him ; but in his heart he ‘ meant nothing so to do’. ‘ So I laid my hand on the book,’ he goes on, ‘ and one of them gave me my oath, and commanded me to kiss the book. They made great courtesy between them who should examine me ; at last, the

rankest Pharisee of them all took upon him to do it.

‘ Then he asked me again, by my oath, where Master Garret was, and whither I had conveyed him. I said I had not conveyed him, nor yet wist where he was, nor whither he was gone, except he were gone to Woodstock, as I had before said. Surely, they said, I brought him some whither this morning, for they might well perceive by my foul shoes and dirty hosen that I had travelled with him the most part of the night. I answered plainly, that I lay at Alban’s Hall with Sir Fitz-james, and that I had good witness thereof. They asked me where I was at evensong. I told them at Frideswide, and that I saw, first, Master Commissary, and then Master Doctor London, come thither to Master Dean. Doctor London and the Dean threatened me that if I would not tell the truth I should surely be sent to the Tower of London, and there be racked, and put into Little-case.

‘ At last when they could get nothing out of me whereby to hurt or accuse any man, or to know anything of that which they sought, they all three together brought me up a long stairs, into a great chamber, over Master Commissary’s chamber, wherein stood a great pair of very high stocks. Then Master Commissary asked me for my purse and girdle, and took away my money and my knives ; and then they put my legs into the stocks, and so locked me fast in them, in which I sat, my feet being almost as high as my head ; and so they departed, locking fast the door, and leaving me alone.

‘ When they were all gone, then came into my

remembrance the worthy forewarning and godly declaration of that most constant martyr of God, Master John Clark, who, well nigh two years before that, when I did earnestly desire him to grant me to be his scholar, said unto me after this sort : “ Dalaber, you desire you wot not what, and that which you are, I fear, unable to take upon you ; for though now my preaching be sweet and pleasant to you, because there is no persecution laid on you for it, yet the time will come, and that, peradventure, shortly, if ye continue to live godly therein, that God will lay on you the cross of persecution, to try you whether you can as pure gold abide the fire. You shall be called and judged a heretic ; you shall be abhorred of the world ; your own friends and kinsfolk will forsake you, and also hate you ; you shall be cast into prison, and none shall dare to help you ; you shall be accused before bishops, to your reproach and shame, to the great sorrow of all your friends and kinsfolk. Then will ye wish ye had never known this doctrine ; then will ye curse Clark, and wish that ye had never known him because he hath brought you to all these troubles.”

‘ At which words I was so grieved that I fell down on my knees at his feet, and with tears and sighs besought him that, for the tender mercy of God, he would not refuse me ; saying that I trusted, verily, that he which had begun this in me would not forsake me, but would give me grace to continue therein to the end. When he heard me say so, he came to me, took me in his arms and kissed me, the tears trickling from his eyes ; and said unto me : “ The Lord God Almighty grant you so to do ; and from henceforth for ever, take me for

your father, and I will take you for my son in Christ.”

In these meditations the long Sunday morning wore away. A little before noon the commissary came again to see if his prisoner was more amenable; finding him, however, still obstinate, he offered him some dinner—a promise which we will hope he fulfilled, for here Dalaber's own narrative abruptly forsakes us, leaving uncompleted, at this point, the most vivid picture which remains to us of a fraction of English life in the reign of Henry VIII. If the curtain fell finally on the little group of students, this narrative alone would furnish us with rare insight into the circumstances under which the Protestants fought their way. The story, however, can be carried something further, and the strangest incident connected with it remains to be told.

Dalaber breaks off on Sunday at noon. The same day, or early the following morning, he was submitted once more to examination: this time, for the discovery of his own offences, and to induce him to give up his confederates. With respect to the latter he proved ‘marvellous obstinate’. ‘All that was gotten of him was with much difficulty;’ nor would he confess to any names as connected with heresy or heretics except that of Clark, which was already known. About himself he was more open. He wrote his ‘book of heresy’, that is, his confession of faith, ‘with his own hand’—his evening's occupation, perhaps, in the stocks in the rector of Lincoln's house; and the next day he was transferred to prison.

This offender being thus disposed of, and strict secrecy being observed to prevent the spread of

alarm, a rapid search was set on foot for books in all suspected quarters. The fear of the authorities was that 'the infect persons would flee', and 'convey' their poison 'away with them'. The officials, once on the scent of heresy, were skilful in running down the game. No time was lost, and by Monday evening many of 'the brethren' had been arrested, their rooms examined, and their forbidden treasures discovered and rifled. Dalaber's store was found 'hid with marvellous secresy'; and in one student's desk a duplicate of Garret's list—the titles of the volumes with which the first 'Religious Tract Society' set themselves to convert England.

Information of all this was conveyed in haste by Dr. London to the Bishop of Lincoln, as the ordinary of the university; and the warden told his story with much self-congratulation. On one point, however, the news which he had to communicate was less satisfactory. Garret himself was gone—utterly gone. Dalaber was obstinate, and no clue to the track of the fugitive could be discovered. The police were at fault; neither bribes nor threats could elicit anything; and in these desperate circumstances, as he told the bishop, the three heads of houses conceived that they might strain a point of propriety for so good a purpose as to prevent the escape of a heretic. Accordingly, after a full report of the points of their success, Doctor London went on to relate the following remarkable proceeding:

'After Master Garret escaped, *the commissary being in extreme pensiveness, knew no other remedy but this extraordinary, and caused a figure to be made by one expert in astronomy—and his judgement doth continually persist upon this, that he fled in a tawny*

*coat south-eastward, and is in the middle of London, and will shortly to the sea side.* He was curate unto the parson of Honey Lane. It is likely he is privily cloaked there. Wherefore, as soon as I knew the judgement of this astronomer, I thought it expedient and my duty with all speed to ascertain your good lordship of all the premises; that in time your lordship may advertise my lord his Grace, and my lord of London. It will be a gracious deed that he and all his pestiferous works, which he carrieth about, might be taken, to the salvation of his soul, opening of many privy heresies, and extinction of the same.'

We might much desire to know what the bishop's sensations were in reading this letter—to know whether it occurred to him that in this naïve acknowledgement, the Oxford heresy hunters were themselves confessing to an act of heresy; and that by the law of the Church, which they were so eager to administer, they were liable to the same death which they were so zealous to secure for the poor vendors of Testaments. So indeed they really were. Consulting the stars had been ruled from immemorial time to be dealing with the devil; the penalty of it was the same as for witchcraft; yet here was a reverend warden of a college considering it his duty to write eagerly of a discovery obtained by these forbidden means, to his own diocesan, begging him to communicate with the Cardinal of York and the Bishop of London, that three of the highest Church authorities in England might become *participes criminis*, by acting on this diabolical information.

Meanwhile, the commissary, not wholly relying on the astrologer, but resolving prudently to make

use of the more earthly resources which were at his disposal, had sent information of Garret's escape to the corporations of Dover, Rye, Winchester, Southampton, and Bristol, with descriptions of the person of the fugitive ; and this step was taken with so much expedition, that before the end of the week no vessel was allowed to leave either of those harbours without being strictly searched.

The natural method proved more effectual than the supernatural, though again with the assistance of a singular accident. Garret had not gone to London ; unfortunately for himself, he had not gone to Wales as he had intended. He left Oxford, as we saw, the evening of Saturday, February 21st. That night he reached a village called Corkthrop, where he lay concealed till Wednesday ; and then, not in the astrologer's orange-tawny dress, but in 'a courtier's coat and buttoned cap', which he had by some means contrived to procure, he set out again on his forlorn journey, making for the nearest sea-port, Bristol, where the police were looking out to receive him. His choice of Bristol was peculiarly unlucky. The 'chapman' of the town was the step-father of Cole, the Oxford proctor : to this person, whose name was Master Wilkyns, the proctor had written a special letter, in addition to the commissary's circular ; and the family connexion acting as a spur to his natural activity, a coast guard had been set before Garret's arrival, to watch for him down the Avon banks, and along the Channel shore for fifteen miles. All the Friday night 'the mayor, with the aldermen, and twenty of the council, had kept privy watch', and searched suspicious houses at Master Wilkyns's instance ; the whole population were on the alert,

and when the next afternoon, a week after his escape, the poor heretic, footsore and weary, dragged himself into the town, he found that he had walked into the lion's mouth. He quickly learnt the danger to which he was exposed, and hurried off again with the best speed which he could command ; but it was too late. The chapman, alert and indefatigable, had heard that a stranger had been seen in the street ; the police were set upon his track, and he was taken at Bedminster, a suburb on the opposite bank of the Avon, and hurried before a magistrate, where he at once acknowledged his identity.

With such happy success were the good chapman's efforts rewarded. Yet in this world there is no light without shadow ; no pleasure without its alloy. In imagination, Master Wilkyns had thought of himself conducting the prisoner in triumph into the streets of Oxford, the hero of the hour. The sour formality of the law condemned him to ill-merited disappointment. Garret had been taken beyond the liberties of the city ; it was necessary, therefore, to commit him to the county gaol, and he was sent to Ilchester. ' Master Wilkyns offered himself to be bound to the said justice in three hundred pounds to discharge him of the said Garret, and to see him surely to Master Proctor's of Oxford ; yet could he not have him, for the justice said that the order of the law would not so serve.' The fortunate captor had, therefore, to content himself with the consciousness of his exploit, and the favourable report of his conduct which was sent to the bishops ; and Garret went first to Ilchester, and thence was taken by special writ, and surrendered to Wolsey.

Thus unkind had fortune shown herself to the chief criminal, guilty of the unpardonable offence of selling Testaments at Oxford, and therefore hunted down as a mad dog, and a common enemy of mankind. He escaped for the present the heaviest consequences, for Wolsey persuaded him to abjure. A few years later we shall again meet him, when he had recovered his better nature, and would not abjure, and died as a brave man should die. In the meantime we return to the university, where the authorities were busy tramping out the remains of the conflagration.

Two days after his letter respecting the astrologer, the Warden of New College wrote again to the Diocesan, with an account of his further proceedings. He was an efficient inquisitor, and the secrets of the poor undergraduates had been unravelled to the last thread. Some of 'the brethren' had confessed; all were in prison; and the doctor desired instructions as to what should be done with them. It must be said for Dr. London, that he was anxious that they should be treated leniently. Dalaber described him as a roaring lion, and he was a bad man, and came at last to a bad end. But it is pleasant to find that even he, a mere blustering arrogant official, was not wholly without redeeming points of character; and as little good will be said for him hereafter, the following passage in his second letter may be placed to the credit side of his account. The tone in which he wrote was at least humane, and must pass for more than an expression of natural kindness, when it is remembered that he was addressing a person with whom tenderness for heresy was a crime.

'These youths,' he said, 'have not been long

conversant with Master Garret, nor have greatly perused his mischievous books; and long before Master Garret was taken, divers of them were weary of these works, and delivered them to Dala-ber. I am marvellous sorry for the young men. If they be openly called upon, although they appear not greatly infect, yet they shall never avoid slander, because my Lord's Grace did send for Master Garret to be taken. I suppose his Grace will know of your good lordship everything. Nothing shall be hid, I assure your good lordship, an every one of them were my brother; and I do only make this moan for these youths, for surely they be of the most towardly young men in Oxford; and as far as I do yet perceive, not greatly infect, but much to blame for reading any part of these works.'

Doctor London's intercession, if timid, was generous; he obviously wished to suggest that the matter should be hushed up, and that the offending parties should be dismissed with a reprimand. If the decision had rested with Wolsey, it is likely that this view would have been readily acted upon. But the Bishop of Lincoln was a person in whom the spirit of humanity had been long exorcized by the spirit of an ecclesiastic. He was staggering along the last years of a life against which his own register bears dreadful witness, and he would not burden his conscience with mercy to heretics. He would not mar the completeness of his barbarous career. He singled out three of the prisoners—Garret, Clark, and Ferrars—and especially entreated that they should be punished. 'They be three perilous men,' he wrote to Wolsey, 'and have been the occasion of the corruption of youth.'

They have done much mischief, and for the love of God let them be handled thereafter.'

Wolsey had Garret in his own keeping, and declined to surrender him. Ferrars had been taken at the Black Friars, in London, and making his submission, was respited, and escaped with abjuration. But Clark was at Oxford, in the bishop's power, and the wicked old man was allowed to work his will upon him. A bill of heresy was drawn, which the prisoner was required to sign. He refused, and must have been sent to the stake, had he not escaped by dying prematurely of the treatment which he had received in prison. His last words only are recorded. He was refused the communion, not perhaps as a special act of cruelty, but because the laws of the Church would not allow the holy thing to be profaned by the touch of a heretic. When he was told that it would not be suffered, he said, '*crede et manducasti*'—'faith is the communion'; and so passed away; a very noble person, so far as the surviving features of his character will let us judge; one who, if his manhood had fulfilled the promise of his youth, would have taken no common part in the Reformation.

The remaining brethren were then dispersed. Some were sent home to their friends—others, Anthony Dalaber among them, were placed on their trial, and being terrified at their position, recanted, and were sentenced to do penance. Ferrars was brought to Oxford for the occasion, and we discern indistinctly (for the mere fact is all which survives) a great fire at Carfax; a crowd of spectators, and a procession of students marching up High Street with faggots on their shoulders, the

solemn beades leading them with gowns and maces. The ceremony was repeated to which Dr. Barnes had been submitted at St. Paul's. They were taken three times round the fire, throwing in each first their faggot, and then some one of the offending books, in token that they repented and renounced their errors.

Thus was Oxford purged of heresy. The state of innocence which Dr. London pathetically lamented was restored, and the heads of houses had peace till their rest was broken by a ruder storm.

In this single specimen we may see a complete image of Wolsey's persecution, as with varying details it was carried out in every town and village from the Tweed to the Land's End. I dwell on the stories of individual suffering, not to colour the narrative, or to re-awaken feelings of bitterness which may well rest now and sleep for ever; but because, through the years in which it was struggling for recognition, the history of Protestantism is the history of its martyrs. No rival theology, as I have said, had as yet shaped itself into formulas. We have not to trace any slow-growing elaboration of opinion. Protestantism, before it became an establishment, was a refusal to live any longer in a lie. It was a falling back upon the undefined untheoretic rules of truth and piety which lay upon the surface of the Bible, and a determination rather to die than to mock with unreality any longer the Almighty Maker of the world. We do not look in the dawning manifestations of such a spirit for subtleties of intellect. Intellect, as it ever does, followed in the wake of the higher virtues of manly honesty and truthfulness. And the

evidences which were to effect the world's conversion were no cunningly arranged syllogistic demonstrations, but once more those loftier evidences which lay in the calm endurance by heroic men of the extremities of suffering, and which touched—not the mind with conviction, but the heart with admiring reverence.

### (iii) THE ROOD OF DOVERCOURT

Every monastery, every parish church, had in those days its special relics, its special images, its special something, to attract the interest of the people. The reverence for the remains of noble and pious men, the dresses which they had worn, or the bodies in which their spirits had lived, was in itself a natural and pious emotion; but it had been petrified into a dogma; and like every other imaginative feeling which is submitted to that bad process, it had become a falsehood, a mere superstition, a substitute for piety, not a stimulus to it, and a perpetual occasion of fraud. The people brought offerings to the shrines where it was supposed that the relics were of greatest potency. The clergy, to secure the offerings, invented the relics, and invented the stories of the wonders which had been worked by them. The greatest exposure of these things took place at the visitation of the religious houses. In the meantime, Bishop Shaxton's unsavoury inventory of what passed under the name of relics in the diocese of Salisbury, will furnish an adequate notion of these objects of popular veneration. There 'be set forth and commended unto the ignorant people', he said, 'as I myself of certain which be already come to my

hands, have perfect knowledge, stinking boots, mucky combs, ragged rochettes, rotten girdles, pyl'd purses, great bullocks' horns, locks of hair, and filthy rags, gobbetts of wood, under the name of parcels of the holy cross, and such pelfry beyond estimation.' Besides matters of this kind, there were images of the Virgin or of the Saints ; above all, roods or crucifixes, of especial potency, the virtues of which had begun to grow uncertain, however, to sceptical Protestants ; and from doubt to denial, and from denial to passionate hatred, there were but a few brief steps. The most famous of the roods was that of Boxley in Kent, which used to smile and bow, or frown and shake its head, as its worshippers were generous or closehanded. The fortunes and misfortunes of this image I shall by and by have to relate. There was another, however, at Dovercourt, in Suffolk, of scarcely inferior fame. This image was of such power that the door of the church in which it stood was open at all hours to all comers, and no human hand could close it. Dovercourt, therefore, became a place of great and lucrative pilgrimage, much resorted to by the neighbours on all occasions of difficulty.

Now it happened that within the circuit of a few miles there lived four young men, to whom the virtues of the rood had become greatly questionable. If it could work miracles, it must be capable, so they thought, of protecting its own substance ; and they agreed to apply a practical test which would determine the extent of its abilities. Accordingly (about the time of Bainham's first imprisonment), Robert King of Dedham, Robert Debenham of Eastbergholt, Nicholas Marsh of Dedham, and Robert Gardiner of Dedham, ' their consciences

being burdened to see the honour of Almighty God so blasphemed by such an idol,' started off 'on a wondrous goodly night' in February, with hard frost and a clear full moon, ten miles across the wolds, to the church.

The door was open, as the legend declared ; but nothing daunted, they entered bravely, and lifting down the 'idol' from its shrine, with its coat and shoes, and the store of tapers which were kept for the services, they carried it on their shoulders for a quarter of a mile from the place where it had stood, 'without any resistance of the said idol.' There setting it on the ground, they struck a light, fastened the tapers to the body, and with the help of them, sacrilegiously burnt the image down to a heap of ashes ; the old dry wood 'blazing so brimly', that it lighted them a full mile of their way home.

For this night's performance, which, if the devil is the father of lies, was a stroke of honest work against him and his family, the world rewarded these men after the usual fashion. One of them, Robert Gardiner, escaped the search which was made, and disappeared till better times ; the remaining three were swinging in chains six months later on the scene of their exploit. Their fate was perhaps inevitable. Men who dare to be the first in great movements are ever self-immolated victims. But I suppose that it was better for them to be bleaching on their gibbets, than crawling at the feet of a wooden rood, and believing it to be God.—*History of England.*

## CHARLES KINGSLEY

1819-75

HOW SALVATION YEO SLEW THE KING  
OF THE GUBBINGS

Now I am sorry to say, for the honour of my country, that it was by no means a safe thing in those days to travel from Plymouth to the north of Devon; because, to get to your journey's end, unless you were minded to make a circuit of many miles, you must needs pass through the territory of a foreign and hostile potentate, who had many times ravaged the dominions, and defeated the forces of her Majesty Queen Elizabeth, and was named (behind his back at least) the King of the Gubbings. 'So now I dare call them,' says Fuller, 'secured by distance, which one of more valour durst not do to their face, for fear their fury fall upon him. Yet hitherto have I met with none who could render a reason of their name. We call the shavings of fish (which are little worth) gubbings; and sure it is that they are sensible that the word importeth shame and disgrace.

'As for the suggestion of my worthy and learned friend, Mr. Joseph Maynard, that such as did *inhabitare montes gibberosos* were called Gubbings, such will smile at the ingenuity who dissent from the truth of the etymology.

'I have read of an England beyond Wales, but the Gubbings land is a Scythia within England, and they pure heathens therein. It lieth nigh Brent. For in the edge of Dartmoor it is reported, that some two hundred years since, two bad women

being with child, fled thither to hide themselves ; to whom certain lewd fellows resorted, and this was their first original. They are a peculiar of their own making, exempt from bishop, archdeacon, and all authority, either ecclesiastical or civil. They live in cots (rather holes than houses) like swine, having all in common, multiplied without marriage into many hundreds. Their language is the dross of the dregs of the vulgar Devonian ; and the more learned a man is, the worse he can understand them. During our civil wars no soldiers were quartered upon them, for fear of being quartered amongst them. Their wealth consisted in other men's goods ; they live by stealing the sheep on the moors ; and vain is it for any to search their houses, being a work beneath the pains of any sheriff, and above the power of any constable. Such is their fleetness, they will outrun many horses ; vivaciousness, they outlive most men ; living in an ignorance of luxury, the extinguisher of life. They hold together like bees ; offend one, and all will revenge his quarrel.

‘ But now I am informed that they begin to be civilized, and tender their children to baptism, and return to be men, yea, Christians again. I hope no *civil* people amongst us will turn barbarians, now these barbarians begin to be civilized.’

With which quip against the Anabaptists of his day, Fuller ends his story ; and I leave him, to set forth how Amyas, in fear of these same Scythians and heathens, rode out of Plymouth on a right good horse, in his full suit of armour, carrying lance and sword, and over and above two great dags, or horse-pistols ; and behind him Salvation Yeo, and five or six North Devon men (who had served with him in Ireland, and were returning on furlough),

clad in head-pieces and quilted jerkins, each man with his pike and sword, and Yeo with arquebuse and match, while two sumpter ponies carried the baggage of this formidable troop.

They pushed on as fast as they could, through Tavistock, to reach before nightfall Lydford, where they meant to sleep : but what with buying the horses, and other delays, they had not been able to start before noon ; and night fell just as they reached the frontiers of the enemy's country. A dreary place enough it was, by the wild glare of sunset. A high table-land of heath, banked on the right by the crags and hills of Dartmoor, and sloping away to the south and west toward the foot of the great cone of Brent-Tor, which towered up like an extinct volcano (as some say that it really is), crowned with the tiny church, the votive offering of some Plymouth merchant of old times, who vowed in sore distress to build a church to the Blessed Virgin on the first point of English land which he should see. Far away, down those waste slopes, they could see the tiny threads of blue smoke rising from the dens of the Gubbings ; and more than once they called a halt, to examine whether distant furze-bushes and ponies might not be the patrols of an advancing army. It is all very well to laugh at it now, in the nineteenth century, but it was no laughing matter then ; as they found before they had gone two miles farther.

On the middle of the down stood a wayside inn ; a desolate and villainous-looking lump of lichen-spotted granite, with windows paper-patched, and rotting thatch kept down by stones and straw-bands ; and at the back a rambling courtledge of barns and walls, around which pigs and bare-foot

children grunted in loving communion of dirt. At the door, rapt apparently in the contemplation of the mountain peaks which glowed rich orange in the last lingering sun-rays, but really watching which way the sheep on the moor were taking, stood the innkeeper, a brawny, sodden-visaged, blear-eyed six feet of brutishness, holding up his hose with one hand, for want of points, and clawing with the other his elf-locks, on which a fair sprinkling of feathers might denote : first, that he was just out of bed, having been out sheep-stealing all the night before ; and secondly, that by natural genius he had anticipated the opinion of that great apostle of sluttishness, Fridericus Dedekind, and his faithful disciple Dekker, which last speaks thus to all gulls and grobians :—‘ Consider that as those trees of cobweb lawn, woven by spinners in the fresh May mornings, do dress the curled heads of the mountains, and adorn the swelling bosoms of the valleys ; or as those snowy fleeces, which the naked briar steals from the innocent sheep to make himself a warm winter livery, are, to either of them both, an excellent ornament ; so make thou accounts that to have feathers sticking here and there on thy head will embellish thee, and set thy crown out rarely. None dare upbraid thee, that like a beggar thou hast lain on straw, or like a travelling pedlar upon musty flocks ; for those feathers will rise up as witnesses to choke him that says so, and to prove thy bed to have been of the softest down.’ Even so did those feathers bear witness that the possessor of Rogues’ Harbour Inn, on Brent-Tor Down, whatever else he lacked, lacked not geese enough to keep him in soft lying.

Presently he spies Amyas and his party coming

slowly over the hill, pricks up his ears, and counts them ; sees Amyas's armour ; shakes his head and grunts ; and then, being a man of few words, utters a sleepy howl—

‘ Mirooi !—Fushing pooale ! ’

A strapping lass—whose only covering (for country women at work in those days dispensed with the ornament of a gown) is a green bodice and red petticoat, neither of them over ample—brings out his fishing-rod and basket, and the man, having tied up his hose with some ends of string, examines the footlink.

‘ Don vlies’ gone ! ’

‘ Maybe,’ says Mary ; ‘ shouldn’t hav’ left mun out to coort. Maybe old hen’s ate mun off. I see her chocking about a while ago.’

The host receives this intelligence with an oath, and replies by a violent blow at Mary’s head, which she, accustomed to such slight matters, dodges, and then returns the blow with good effect on the shock head.

Whereon mine host, equally accustomed to such slight matters, quietly shambles off, howling as he departs—

‘ Tell patrico ! ’

Mary runs in, combs her hair, slips a pair of stockings and her best gown over her dirt, and awaits the coming guests, who make a few long faces at the ‘ mucksy sort of a place,’ but prefer to spend the night there than to bivouac close to the enemy’s camp.

So the old hen who has swallowed the dun fly is killed, plucked, and roasted, and certain ‘ black Dartmoor mutton ’ is put on the gridiron, and being compelled to confess the truth by that fiery torment,

proclaims itself to all noses as red-deer venison. In the meanwhile Amyas has put his horse and the ponies into a shed, to which he can find neither lock nor key, and therefore returns grumbling, not without fear for his steeds' safety. The baggage is heaped in a corner of the room, and Amyas stretches his legs before a turf fire ; while Yeo, who has his notions about the place, posts himself at the door, and the men are seized with a desire to superintend the cooking, probably to be attributed to the fact that Mary is cook.

Presently Yeo comes in again.

'There's a gentleman just coming up, Sir, all alone.'

'Ask him to make one of our party, then, with my compliments.'

Yeo goes out, and returns in five minutes.

'Please, Sir, he's gone in back ways, by the court.'

'Well, he has an odd taste, if he makes himself at home here.'

Out goes Yeo again, and comes back once more after five minutes, in high excitement.

'Come out, Sir ; for goodness' sake come out. I've got him. Safe as a rat in a trap, I have !'

'Who ?'

'A Jesuit, Sir.'

'Nonsense, man !'

'I tell you truth, Sir. I went round the house, for I didn't like the looks of him as he came up. I knew he was one of them villains the minute he came up, by the way he turned in his toes, and put down his feet so still and careful, like as if he was afraid of offending God at every step. So I just put my eye between the wall and the dorn of the gate,

and I saw him come up to the back door and knock, and call "Mary!" quite still, like any Jesuit; and the wench flies out to him ready to eat him; and "Go away", I heard her say, "there's a dear man;" and then something about a "queer cuffin" (that's a justice in these canters' thieves' Latin); and with that he takes out a somewhat—I'll swear it was one of those Popish Agnuses—and gives it her; and she kisses it, and crosses herself, and asks him if that's the right way, and then puts it into her bosom, and he says, "Bless you, my daughter;" and then I was sure of the dog; and he slips quite still to the stable, and peeps in, and when he sees no one there, in he goes, and out I go, and shut to the door, and back a cart that was there up against it, and call out one of the men to watch the stable, and the girl's crying like mad.'

'What a fool's trick, man! How do you know that he is not some honest gentleman after all?'

'Fool or none, Sir, honest gentlemen don't give maidens Agnuses. I've put him in; and if you want him let out again, you must come and do it yourself, for my conscience is against it, Sir. If the Lord's enemies are delivered into my hand, I'm answerable, Sir,' went on Yeo as Amyas hurried out with him, "'Tis written, "If any let one of them go, his life shall be for the life of him."'

So Amyas ran out, pulled back the cart grumbling, opened the door, and began a string of apologies to—his cousin Eustace.

Yes, here he was, with such a countenance, half-foolish, half-venomous, as Reynard wears when the last spadeful of earth is thrown back, and he is revealed sitting disconsolately on his tail—within a yard of the terriers' noses.

Neither cousin spoke for a minute or two. At last Amyas—

‘Well, cousin hide-and-seek, how long have you added horse-stealing to your other trades?’

‘My dear Amyas,’ said Eustace, very meekly, ‘I may surely go into an inn stable without intending to steal what is in it.’

‘Of course, old fellow,’ said Amyas, mollified, ‘I was only in jest. But what brings you here? Not prudence, certainly.’

‘I am bound to know no prudence save for the Lord’s work.’

‘That’s giving away Agnus Deis, and deceiving poor heathen wenches, I suppose,’ said Yeo.

Eustace answered pretty roundly—

‘Heathens? Yes, truly; you Protestants leave these poor wretches heathens, and then insult and persecute those who, with a devotion unknown to you, labour at the danger of their lives to make them Christians. Mr. Amyas Leigh, you can give me up to be hanged at Exeter, if it shall so please you to disgrace your own family; but from this spot neither you, no, nor all the myrmidons of your Queen, shall drive me, while there is a soul here left unsaved.’

‘Come out of the stable, at least,’ said Amyas; ‘you don’t want to make the horses Papists, as well as the asses, do you? Come out, man, and go to the devil your own way. I shan’t inform against you; and Yeo here will hold his tongue if I tell him, I know.’

‘It goes sorely against my conscience, Sir; but being that he is your cousin, of course——’

‘Of course; and now come in and eat with me;

supper 's just ready, and bygones shall be bygones, if you will have them so.'

How much forgiveness Eustace felt in his heart, I know not : but he knew, of course, that he ought to forgive ; and to go in and eat with Amyas was to perform an act of forgiveness, and for the best of motives, too, for by it the cause of the Church might be furthered ; and acts and motives being correct, what more was needed ? So in he went. . . .

'Take me,' said Eustace, 'if you will, Sir. You, who complain of us that we keep no faith with heretics, will perhaps recollect that you asked me into this room as your guest ; and that in your good faith I trusted, when I entered it.'

The argument was a worthless one in law ; for Eustace had been a prisoner before he was a guest, and Amyas was guilty of something very like misprision of treason in not handing him over to the nearest justice. However, all he did was to go to the door, open it, and bowing to his cousin, bid him walk out and go to the devil, since he seemed to have set his mind on ending his days in the company of that personage.

Whereon Eustace vanished.

'Pooh !' said Amyas to himself : 'I can find out enough, and too much, I fear, without the help of such crooked vermin. I must see Cary ; I must see Salterne ; and I suppose, if I am ready to do my duty, I shall learn somehow what it is. Now to sleep ; to-morrow up and away to what God sends.'

'Come in hither, men,' shouted he down the passage, 'and sleep here. Haven't you had enough of this villainous sour cider ?'

The men came in yawning, and settled themselves to sleep on the floor.

‘Where’s Yeo?’

No one knew; he had gone out to say his prayers, and had not returned.

‘Never mind,’ said Amyas, who suspected some plot on the old man’s part. ‘He’ll take care of himself, I’ll warrant him.’

‘No fear of that, Sir;’ and the four tars were soon snoring in concert round the fire, while Amyas laid himself on the settle, with his saddle for a pillow.

. . . . .

It was about midnight, when Amyas leaped to his feet, or rather fell upon his back, upsetting saddle, settle, and finally, table, under the notion that ten thousand flying dragons were bursting in the window close to his ear, with howls most fierce and fell. The flying dragons past, however, being only a flock of terror-stricken geese, which flew flapping and screaming round the corner of the house: but the noise which had startled them did not pass; and another minute made it evident that a sharp fight was going on in the court-yard, and that Yeo was hallooing lustily for help.

Out turned the men, sword in hand, burst the back door open, stumbling over pails and pitchers, and into the courtyard, where Yeo, his back against the stable-door, was holding his own manfully with sword and buckler against a dozen men.

Dire and manifold was the screaming; geese screamed, chickens screamed, pigs screamed, donkeys screamed, Mary screamed from an upper window; and to complete the chorus, a flock of plovers, attracted by the noise, wheeled round and round overhead, and added their screams also to that Dutch concert.

The screaming went on, but the fight ceased ; for, as Amyas rushed into the yard, the whole party of ruffians took to their heels, and vanished over a low hedge at the other end of the yard.

‘ Are you hurt, Yeo ? ’

‘ Not a scratch, thank heaven ! But I’ve got two of them, the ringleaders, I have. One of them’s against the wall. Your horse did for t’other.’

The wounded man was lifted up ; a huge ruffian, nearly as big as Amyas himself. Yeo’s sword had passed through his body. He groaned and choked for breath.

‘ Carry him indoors. Where is the other ? ’

‘ Dead as a herring, in the straw. Have a care, men, have a care how you go in ! the horses are near mad ! ’

However, the man was brought out after a while. With him all was over. They could feel neither pulse nor breath.

‘ Carry him in too, poor wretch. And now, Yeo, what is the meaning of all this ? ’

Yeo’s story was soon told. He could not get out of his Puritan head the notion (quite unfounded, of course) that Eustace had meant to steal the horses. He had seen the innkeeper sneak off at their approach ; and, expecting some night attack, he had taken up his lodging for the night in the stable.

As he expected, an attempt was made. The door was opened (how, he could not guess, for he had fastened it inside), and two fellows came in, and began to loose the beasts. Yeo’s account was, that he seized the big fellow, who drew a knife on him, and broke loose ; the horses, terrified at the scuffle, kicked right and left ; one man fell, and the other ran out, calling for help, with Yeo at his heels ;

‘Whereon,’ said Yeo, ‘seeing a dozen more on me with clubs and bows, I thought best to shorten the number while I could, ran the rascal through, and stood on my ward; and only just in time I was, what’s more; there’s two arrows in the house wall, and two or three more in my buckler, which I caught up as I went out, for I had hung it close by the door, you see, Sir, to be all ready in case:’ said the cunning old Philistine-slayer, as they went in after the wounded man.

But hardly had they stumbled through the low doorway into the back-kitchen when a fresh hubbub arose inside—more shouts for help. Amyas ran forward, breaking his head against the doorway, and beheld, as soon as he could see for the flashes in his eyes, an old acquaintance, held on each side by a sturdy sailor.

With one arm in the sleeve of his doublet, and the other in a not over spotless shirt; holding up his hose with one hand, and with the other a candle, whereby he had lighted himself to his own confusion; foaming with rage, stood Mr. Evan Morgans, *alias* Father Parsons, looking, between his confused habiliments and his fiery visage (as Yeo told him to his face), ‘the very moral of a half-plucked turkey-cock.’ And behind him, dressed, stood Eustace Leigh.

‘We found the maid letting these here two out by the front door,’ said one of the captors.

‘Well, Mr. Parsons,’ said Amyas; ‘and what are you about here? A pretty nest of thieves and Jesuits we seem to have routed out this evening.’

‘About my calling, Sir,’ said Parsons, stoutly. ‘By your leave, I shall prepare this my wounded’

lamb for that account to which your man's cruelty has untimely sent him.'

The wounded man, who lay upon the floor, heard Parsons's voice, and moaned for the 'patrico'.

'You see, Sir,' said he, pompously, 'the sheep know their shepherd's voice.'

'The wolves, you mean, you hypocritical scoundrel!' said Amyas, who could not contain his disgust. 'Let the fellow truss up his points, lads, and do his work. After all, the man is dying.'

'The requisite matters, Sir, are not at hand,' said Parsons, unabashed.

'Eustace, go and fetch his matters for him; you seem to be in all his plots.'

Eustace went silently and sullenly.

'What's that fresh noise at the back, now?'

'The maid, Sir, a-wailing over her uncle; the fellow that we saw sneak away when we came up. It was him the horse killed.'

It was true. The wretched host had slipped off on their approach, simply to call the neighbouring outlaws to the spoil; and he had been filled with the fruit of his own devices.

'His blood be on his own head,' said Amyas.

'I question, Sir,' said Yeo, in a low voice, 'whether some of it will not be on the heads of those proud prelates who go clothed in purple and fine linen, instead of going forth to convert such as he, and then wonder how these Jesuits get hold of them. If they give place to the devil in their sheep-folds, sure he'll come in and lodge there. Look, Sir, there's a sight in a gospel land!'

And, indeed, the sight was curious enough. For Parsons was kneeling by the side of the dying man, listening earnestly to the confession which the man

sobbed out in his gibberish, between the spasms of his wounded chest. Now and then Parsons shook his head ; and when Eustace returned with the holy wafer, and the oil for extreme unction, he asked him, in a low voice, ‘ Ballard, interpret for me.’

And Eustace knelt down on the other side of the sufferer, and interpreted his thieves’ dialect into Latin ; and the dying man held a hand of each, and turned first to one and then to the other stupid eyes—not without affection, though, and gratitude.

‘ I can’t stand this mummary any longer,’ said Yeo. ‘ Here ’s a soul perishing before my eyes, and it ’s on my conscience to speak a word in season.’

‘ Silence ! ’ whispered Amyas, holding him back by the arm ; ‘ he knows them, and he don’t know you ; they are the first who ever spoke to him as if he had a soul to be saved, and first come, first served ; you can do no good. See, the man’s face is brightening already.’

‘ But, Sir, ’tis a false peace.’

‘ At all events he is confessing his sins, Yeo ; and if that ’s not good for him, and you, and me, what is ? ’

‘ Yea, Amen ! Sir ; but this is not to the right person.’

‘ How do you know his words will not go to the right person after all, though he may not send them there ? By heaven ! the man is dead ! ’

It was so. The dark catalogue of brutal deeds had been gasped out ; but ere the words of absolution could follow, the head had fallen back, and all was over.

‘ Confession *in extremis* is sufficient,’ said Parsons to Eustace (‘ Ballard,’ as Parsons called him, to

Amyas's surprise), as he rose. 'As for the rest, the intention will be accepted instead of the act.'

'The Lord have mercy on his soul!' said Eustace.

'His soul is lost before our very eyes,' said Yeo.

'Mind your own business,' said Amyas.

'Humph; but I'll tell you, Sir, what our business is, if you'll step aside with me. I find that poor fellow that lies dead is none other than the leader of the Gubbings; the king of them, as they dare to call him.'

'Well, what of that?'

'Mark my words, Sir, if we have not a hundred stout rogues upon us before two hours are out; forgive us they never will; and if we get off with our lives, which I don't much expect, we shall leave our horses behind; for we can hold the house, Sir, well enough till morning: but the court-yard we can't, that's certain!'

'We had better march at once, then.'

'Think, Sir; if they catch us up—as they are sure to do, knowing the country better than we—how will our shot stand their arrows?'

'True, old wisdom; we must keep the road; and we must keep together; and so be a mark for them, while they will be behind every rock and bank; and two or three flights of arrows will do our business for us. Humph! stay, I have a plan.'

And stepping forward he spoke—

'Eustace, you will be so kind as to go back to your lambs; and tell them, that if they meddle with us cruel wolves again to-night, we are ready and willing to fight to the death, and have plenty of shot and powder at their service. Father Parsons, you will be so kind as to accompany us;

it is but fitting that the shepherd should be hostage for his sheep.'

'If you carry me off this spot, Sir, you carry my corpse only,' said Parsons. 'I may as well die here as be hanged elsewhere, like my martyred brother Campian.'

'If you take him, you must take me too,' said Eustace.

'What if we won't?'

'How will you gain by that? you can only leave me here. You cannot make me go to the Gubbings, if I do not choose.'

Amyas uttered, *sotto voce*, an anathema on Jesuits, Gubbings, and things in general. He was in a great hurry to get to Bideford, and he feared that this business would delay him, as it was, a day or two. He wanted to hang Parsons: he did not want to hang Eustace; and Eustace, he knew, was well aware of that latter fact, and played his game accordingly: but time ran on, and he had to answer sulkily enough—

'Well then; if you, Eustace, will go and give my message to your converts, I will promise to set Mr. Parsons free again before we come to Lydford town; and I advise you, if you have any regard for his life, to see that your eloquence be persuasive enough; for as sure as I am an Englishman, and he none, if the Gubbings attack us, the first bullet that I shall fire at them will have gone through his scoundrelly brains.'

Parsons still kicked.

'Very well, then, my merry men all. Tie this gentleman's hands behind his back, get the horses out, and we'll right away up into Dartmoor, find a good high tor, stand our ground there till morning,

and then carry him into Okehampton to the nearest justice. If he chooses to delay me in my journey, it is fair that I should make him pay for it.'

Whereon Parsons gave in, and being fast tied by his arm to Amyas's saddle, trudged alongside his horse for several weary miles, while Yeo walked by his side, like a friar by a condemned criminal; and in order to keep up his spirits, told him the woful end of Nicholas Saunders the Legate, and how he was found starved to death in a bog.

'And if you wish, Sir, to follow in his blessed steps, which I heartily hope you will do, you have only to go over that big cow-backed hill there on your right hand, and down again the other side to Crawmere pool, and there you'll find as pretty a bog to die in as ever Jesuit needed: and your ghost may sit there on a grass tummock, and tell your beads without any one asking for you till the Day of Judgement; and much good may it do you!'

At which imagination Yeo was actually heard, for the first and last time in this history, to laugh most heartily.

His ho-ho's had scarcely died away, when they saw shining under the moon the old tower of Lydford Castle.

'Cast the fellow off now,' said Amyas.

'Aye, aye, Sir!' and Yeo and Simon Evans stopped behind, and did not come up for ten minutes after.

'What have you been about so long?'

'Why, Sir,' said Evans, 'you see the man had a very fair pair of hose on, and a brand-new kersey doublet, very warm-lined; and so, thinking it a pity good clothes should be wasted on such

noxious trade, we've just brought them along with us.'

'Spoiling the Egyptians,' said Yeo, as comment.

'And what have you done with the man?'

'Hove him over the bank, Sir; he pitched into a big furze-bush, and for aught I know, there he'll bide.'

'You rascal, have you killed him?'

'Never fear, Sir,' said Yeo, in his cool fashion.

'A Jesuit has as many lives as a cat, and, I believe, rides broomsticks post, like a witch. He would be at Lydford now before us, if his master Satan had any business for him there.'—*Westward Ho.*

### HOW AMYAS AND HIS CREW TOOK THE GOLD-TRAIN

A FORTNIGHT or more has passed in severe toil: but not more severe than they have endured many a time before. Bidding farewell once and for ever to the green ocean of the eastern plains, they have crossed the Cordillera; they have taken a longing glance at the city of Santa Fé, lying in the midst of rich gardens on its lofty mountain plateau, and have seen, as was to be expected, that it was far too large a place for any attempt of theirs. But they have not altogether thrown away their time. Their Indian lad has discovered that a gold-train is going down from Santa Fé toward the Magdalena; and they are waiting for it beside the miserable rut which serves for a road, encamped in a forest of oaks which would make them almost fancy themselves back again in Europe, were it not for the tree-ferns which form the undergrowth; and were it not, too, for the deep gorges opening at

their very feet ; in which, while their brows are swept by the cool breezes of a temperate zone, they can see far below, dim through their everlasting vapour-bath of rank hot steam, the mighty forms and gorgeous colours of the tropic forest.

They have pitched their camp among the tree-ferns, above a spot where the path winds along a steep hill-side, with a sheer cliff below of many a hundred feet. There was a road there once, perhaps, when Cundinamarca was a civilized and cultivated kingdom ; but all which Spanish misrule has left of it are a few steps slipping from their places at the bottom of a narrow ditch of mud. It has gone the way of the aqueducts and bridges and post-houses, the gardens and the llama flocks of that strange empire. In the mad search for gold, every art of civilization has fallen to decay, save architecture alone ; and that survives only in the splendid cathedrals which have risen upon the ruins of the temples of the Sun, in honour of a milder Pantheon ; if, indeed, that can be called a milder one which demands (as we have seen already) human sacrifices, unknown to the gentle nature-worship of the Incas.

And now the rapid tropic vegetation has reclaimed its old domains, and Amyas and his crew are as utterly alone, within a few miles of an important Spanish settlement, as they would be in the solitudes of the Orinoco or the Amazon.

In the meanwhile, all their attempts to find sulphur and nitre have been unavailing ; and they have been forced to depend after all (much to Yeo's disgust) upon their swords and arrows. Be it so : Drake took *Nombre de Dios* and the gold-train there with no better weapons ; and they may do as much.

So, having blocked up the road above by felling a large tree across it, they sit there among the flowers chewing coca, in default of food and drink, and meditating among themselves the cause of a mysterious roar, which has been heard nightly in their wake ever since they left the banks of the Meta. Jaguar it is not, nor monkey; it is unlike any sound they know; and why should it follow them? However, they are in the land of wonders; and, moreover, the gold-train is far more important than any noise.

At last, up from beneath there was a sharp crack and a loud cry. The crack was neither the snapping of a branch nor the tapping of a woodpecker; the cry was neither the scream of the parrot nor the howl of the monkey—

‘That was a whip’s crack,’ said Yeo, ‘and a woman’s wail. They are close here, lads!’

‘A woman’s? Do they drive women in their gangs?’ asked Amyas.

‘Why not, the brutes? There they are, Sir. Did you see their basnets glitter?’

‘Men!’ said Amyas, in a low voice, ‘I trust you all not to shoot till I do. Then give them one arrow, out swords, and at them! Pass the word along.’

Up they came, slowly, and all hearts beat loud at their coming.

First, about twenty soldiers, only one-half of whom were on foot; the other half being borne, incredible as it may seem, each in a chair on the back of a single Indian, while those who marched had consigned their heaviest armour and their arquebuses into the hands of attendant slaves, who were each pricked on at will by the pikes of the soldier behind them.

‘The men are mad to let their ordnance out of their hands.’

‘O Sir, an Indian will pray to an arquebuse not to shoot him ; be sure their artillery is safe enough,’ said Yeo.

‘Look at the proud villains,’ whispered another, ‘to make dumb beasts of human creatures like that !’

‘Ten shot,’ counted the business-like Amyas, ‘and ten pikes ; Will can tackle them up above.’

Last of this troop came some inferior officer, also in his chair, who, as he went slowly up the hill, with his face turned toward the gang which followed, drew every other second the cigar from his lips, to inspirit them with those pious ejaculations to the various objects of his worship, divine, human, anatomic, wooden, and textile, which earned for the pious Spaniards of the sixteenth century the uncharitable imputation of being at once the most fetish-ridden idolaters and the most abominable swearers of all Europeans.

‘The blasphemous dog !’ said Yeo, fumbling at his bow-string, as if he longed to send an arrow through him. But Amyas had hardly laid his finger on the impatient veteran’s arm when another procession followed, which made them forget all else.

A sad and hideous sight it was : yet one too common even then in those remoter districts, where the humane edicts were disregarded, which the prayers of Dominican friars (to their everlasting honour be it spoken) had wrung from the Spanish sovereigns ; and which the legislation of that most wise, virtuous, and heroic Inquisitor (paradoxical as the words may seem), Pedro de la Gasca, had carried

into effect in Peru—futile and tardy alleviations of cruelties and miseries unexampled in the history of Christendom, or perhaps on earth, save in the conquests of Sennacherib and Zinghis-Khan. But on the frontiers, where negroes were imported to endure the toil which was found fatal to the Indian, and all Indian tribes convicted (or suspected) of cannibalism were hunted down for the salvation of their souls and the enslavement of their bodies, such scenes as these were still too common; and, indeed, if we are to judge from Humboldt's impartial account, were not very much amended even at the close of the last century, in those much-boasted Jesuit missions in which (as many of them as existed anywhere but on paper) military tyranny was superadded to monastic, and the Gospel preached with fire and sword, almost as shamelessly as by the first *conquistadores*.

A line of Indians, negroes, and Zambos, naked, emaciated, scarred with whips and fetters, and chained together by their left wrists, toiled upwards, panting and perspiring under the burden of a basket held up by a strap which passed across their foreheads. Yeo's sneer was but too just; there were not only old men and youths among them but women; slender young girls, mothers with children running at their knee; and, at the sight, a low murmur of indignation rose from the ambushed Englishmen, worthy of the free and righteous hearts of those days, when Raleigh could appeal to man and God, on the ground of a common humanity, in behalf of the outraged heathens of the New World: when Englishmen still knew that man was man, and that the instinct of freedom was the righteous voice of God; ere the hapless seven-

teenth century had brutalized them also, by bestowing on them, amid a hundred other bad legacies, the fatal gift of negro slaves.

But the first forty, so Amyas counted, bore on their backs a burden which made all, perhaps, but him and Yeo, forget even the wretches who bore it. Each basket contained a square package of carefully corded hide ; the look whereof friend Amyas knew full well.

‘ What ’s in they, captain ? ’

‘ Gold ! ’ And at that magic word all eyes were strained greedily forward, and such a rustle followed ; that Amyas, in the very face of detection, had to whisper—

‘ Be men, be men, or you will spoil all yet ! ’

The last twenty, or so, of the Indians bore larger baskets, but more lightly freighted, seemingly with manioc, and maizebread, and other food for the party ; and after them came, with their bearers and attendants, just twenty soldiers more, followed by the officer in charge, who smiled away in his chair, and twirled two huge mustachios, thinking of nothing less than of the English arrows which were itching to be away and through his ribs. The ambush was complete ; the only question, how and when to begin ?

Amyas had a shrinking, which all will understand, from drawing bow in cool blood on men so utterly unsuspecting and defenceless, even though in the very act of devilish cruelty—for devilish cruelty it was, as three or four drivers armed with whips lingered up and down the slowly-staggering file of Indians, and avenged every moment’s lagging, even every stumble, by a blow of the cruel manati-hide, which cracked like a pistol-shot

against the naked limbs of the silent and uncomplaining victim.

Suddenly the *casus belli*, as usually happens, arose of its own accord.

The last but one of the chained line was an old grey-headed man, followed by a slender graceful girl of some eighteen years old, and Amyas's heart yearned over them as they came up. Just as they passed, the foremost of the file had rounded the corner above; there was a bustle, and a voice shouted, 'Halt, Señors! there is a tree across the path!'

'A tree across the path?' bellowed the officer, with a variety of passionate addresses to the Mother of Heaven, the fiends of hell, St. Jago of Compostella, and various other personages; while the line of trembling Indians, told to halt above, and driven on by blows below, surged up and down upon the ruinous steps of the Indian road, until the poor old man fell grovelling on his face.

The officer leaped down, and hurried upward to see what had happened. Of course, he came across the old man.

'*Sin peccado concebida!* Grandfather of Beelzebub, is this a place to lie worshipping your fiends?' and he pricked the prostrate wretch with the point of his sword.

The old man tried to rise: but the weight on his head was too much for him; he fell again, and lay motionless.

The driver applied the manati-hide across his loins, once, twice, with fearful force; but even that specific was useless.

'*Gastado*, Señor Capitan,' said he, with a shrug. 'Used up. He has been failing these three months!'

‘What does the intendant mean by sending me out with worn-out cattle like these? Forward there!’ shouted he. ‘Clear away the tree, Señors, and I’ll soon clear the chain. Hold it up, Pedrillo!’

The driver held up the chain, which was fastened to the old man’s wrist. The officer stepped back, and flourished round his head a Toledo blade, whose beauty made Amyas break the Tenth Commandment on the spot.

The man was a tall, handsome, broad-shouldered, high-bred man; and Amyas thought that he was going to display the strength of his arm, and the temper of his blade, in severing the chain at one stroke.

Even he was not prepared for the recondite fancies of a Spanish adventurer, worthy son or nephew of those first conquerors, who used to try the keenness of their swords upon the living bodies of Indians, and regale themselves at meals with the odour of roasting caciques.

The blade gleamed in the air, once, twice, and fell: not on the chain, but on the wrist which it fettered. There was a shriek—a crimson flash—and the chain and its prisoner were parted indeed.

One moment more, and Amyas’s arrow would have been through ~~the~~ throat of the murderer, who paused, regarding his workmanship with a satisfied smile; but vengeance was not to come from him.

Quick and fierce as a tiger-cat, the girl sprang on the ruffian, and with the intense strength of passion, clasped him in her arms, and leaped with him from the narrow ledge into the abyss below.

There was a rush, a shout; all faces were bent over the precipice. The girl hung by her chained wrist: the officer was gone. There was a moment’s

awful silence ; and then Amyas heard his body crashing through the tree-tops far below.

‘ Haul her up ! Hew her in pieces ! Burn the witch ! ’ and the driver, seizing the chain, pulled at it with all his might, while all springing from their chairs, stooped over the brink.

Now was the time for Amyas ! Heaven had delivered them into his hands. Swift and sure, at ten yards off, his arrow rushed through the body of the driver, and then, with a roar as of the leaping lion, he sprang like an avenging angel into the midst of the astonished ruffians.

His first thought was for the girl. In a moment, by sheer strength, he had jerked her safely up into the road ; while the Spaniards recoiled right and left, fancying him for the moment some mountain giant or supernatural foe. His hurrah undeceived them in an instant, and a cry of ‘ English ! Lutheran dogs ! ’ arose, but arose too late. The men of Devon had followed their captain’s lead ; a storm of arrows left five Spaniards dead, and a dozen more wounded, and down leapt Salvation Yeo, his white hair streaming behind him, with twenty good swords more, and the work of death began.

The Spaniards fought like lions ; but they had no time to fix their arquebuses on the crutches ; no room, in that narrow path, to use their pikes. The English had the wall of them ; and to have the wall there, was to have the foe’s life at their mercy. Five desperate minutes, and not a living Spaniard stood upon those steps ; and certainly no living one lay in the green abyss below. Two only, who were behind the rest, happening to be in full armour, escaped without mortal wound, and fled down the hill again.

‘After them! Michael Evans and Simon Heard; and catch them, if they run a league.’

The two long and lean Clovelly men, active as deer from forest-training, ran two feet for the Spaniards’ one; and in ten minutes returned, having done their work; while Amyas and his men hurried past the Indians, to help Cary and the party forward, where shouts and musket-shots announced a sharp affray.

Their arrival settled the matter. All the Spaniards fell but three or four, who scrambled down the crannies of the cliff.

‘Let not one of them escape! Slay them as Israel slew Amalek!’ cried Yeo, as he bent over; and ere the wretches could reach a place of shelter, an arrow was quivering in each body, as it rolled lifeless down the rocks.

‘Now, then! Loose the Indians!’

They found armourers’ tools on one of the dead bodies, and it was done.

‘We are your friends,’ said Amyas. ‘All we ask is, that you shall help us to carry this gold down to the Magdalena, and then you are free.’—*Westward Ho!*

## HOW THEY TOOK THE GREAT GALLEON

It was long past midnight, and the moon was down. The sentinels, who had tramped and challenged overhead till they thought their officers were sound asleep, had slipped out of the unwholesome rays of the planet to seek that health and peace which they considered their right, and slept as soundly as the bishop’s self.

Two long lines glided out from behind the isolated rocks of the Morro Grande, which bounded

the bay some five hundred yards astern of the galleon. They were almost invisible on the glittering surface of the water, being perfectly white; and, had a sentinel been looking out, he could only have descried them by the phosphorescent flashes along their sides.

Now the bishop had awoke, and turned himself over uneasily; for the wine was dying out within him, and his shoulders had slipped down, and his heels were up, and his head ached: so he sat upright in his hammock, looked out upon the bay, and called Tita.

‘Put another pillow under my head, child! What is that? a fish?’

Tita looked. She did not think it was a fish: but she did not choose to say so; for it might have produced an argument, and she had her reasons for not keeping his holiness awake.

The bishop looked again; settled that it must be a white whale, or shark, or other monster of the deep; crossed himself, prayed for a safe voyage, and snored once more.

Presently the cabin-door opened gently, and the head of the Señor intendant appeared.

Tita sat up; and then began crawling like a snake along the floor, among the chairs and tables, by the light of the cabin lamp.

‘Is he asleep?’

‘Yes: but the casket is under his head.’

‘Curse him! How shall we take it?’

‘I brought him a fresh pillow half an hour ago; I hung his hammock wrong on purpose that he might want one. I thought to slip the box away as I did it; but the old ox nursed it in both hands all the while.’

‘What shall we do, in the name of all the fiends? She sails to-morrow morning, and then all is lost.’

Tita showed her white teeth, and touched the dagger which hung by the intendant’s side.

‘I dare not!’ said the rascal, with a shudder.

‘I dare!’ said she. ‘He whipt my mother, because she would not give me up to him to be taught in his schools, when she went to the mines. And she went to the mines, and died there in three months. I saw her go, with a chain round her neck; but she never came back again. Yes; I dare kill him! I will kill him! I will!’

The Señor felt his mind much relieved. He had no wish, of course, to commit the murder himself; for he was a good Catholic, and feared the devil. But Tita was an Indian, and her being lost did not matter so much. Indians’ souls were cheap, like their bodies. So he answered, ‘But we shall be discovered!’

‘I will leap out of the window with the casket, and swim ashore. They will never suspect you, and they will fancy I am drowned.’

‘The sharks may seize you, Tita. You had better give me the casket.’

Tita smiled. ‘You would not like to lose that, eh? though you care little about losing me. And yet you told me that you loved me?’

‘And I do love you, Tita! light of my eyes! life of my heart! I swear, by all the saints, I love you. I will marry you, I swear I will—I will swear on the crucifix, if you like!’

‘Swear, then, or I do not give you the casket,’ said she, holding out the little crucifix round her neck, and devouring him with the wild eyes of passionate unreasoning tropic love.

He swore, trembling, and deadly pale.

‘Give me your dagger.’

‘No, not mine. It may be found. I shall be suspected. What if my sheath were seen to be empty?’

‘Your knife will do. His throat is soft enough.’

And she glided stealthily as a cat toward the hammock, while her cowardly companion stood shivering at the other end of the cabin, and turned his back to her, that he might not see the deed.

He stood waiting, one minute—two—five? was it not an hour, rather? A cold sweat bathed his limbs; the blood beat so fiercely within his temples, that his head rung again. Was that a death-bell tolling? No; it was the pulses of his brain. Impossible, surely a death-bell. Whence could it come?

There was a struggle—ah! she was about it now; a stifled cry—Ah! he had dreaded that most of all, to hear the old man cry. Would there be much blood? He hoped not. Another struggle, and Tita’s voice, apparently muffled, called for help.

‘I cannot help you. Mother of Mercies! I dare not help you!’ hissed he. ‘She-devil! you have begun it, and you must finish it yourself!’

A heavy arm from behind clasped his throat. The bishop had broken loose from her, and seized him! Or was it his ghost? or a fiend come to drag him down to the pit? And forgetting all but mere wild terror, he opened his lips for a scream, which would have wakened every soul on board. But a handkerchief was thrust into his mouth; and in another minute he found himself bound hand and foot, and laid upon the table by a gigantic enemy. The cabin was full of armed

men, two of whom were lashing up the bishop in his hammock; two more had seized Tita; and more were clambering up into the stern-gallery beyond, wild figures, with bright blades and armour gleaming in the starlight.

‘Now, Will,’ whispered the giant who had seized him, ‘forward and clap the fore-hatches on; and shout “Fire!” with all your might. Girl! murderess! your life is in my hands. Tell me where the commander sleeps, and I pardon you.’

Tita looked up at the huge speaker, and obeyed in silence. The intendant heard him enter the colonel’s cabin, and then a short scuffle, and silence for a moment.

But only for a moment; for already the alarm had been given, and mad confusion reigned through every deck. Amyas (for it was none other) had already gained the poop; the sentinels were gagged and bound; and every half-naked wretch who came trembling up on deck in his shirt by the main hatchway, calling one, ‘Fire!’ another, ‘Wreck!’ and another, ‘Treason!’ was hurled into the scuppers, and there secured.

‘Lower away that boat!’ shouted Amyas in Spanish to his first batch of prisoners.

The men, unarmed and naked, could but obey.

‘Now then, jump in. Here, hand them to the gangway as they come up.’

It was done; and as each appeared, he was kicked to the scuppers, and bundled down over the side.

‘She’s full. Cast loose now, and off with you. If you try to board again, we’ll sink you.’

‘Fire! fire!’ shouted Cary, forward—‘Up the main hatchway for your lives!’

The ruse succeeded utterly ; and before half an hour was over, all the ship's boats which could be lowered were filled with Spaniards in their shirts, getting ashore as best they could.

'Here is a new sort of *camisado*,' quoth Cary. 'The last Spanish one I saw was at the sortie from Smerwick : but this is somewhat more prosperous than that.'

'Get the main and foresail up, Will !' said Amyas, 'cut the cable ; and we will plume the quarry as we fly.'

'Spoken like a good falconer. Heaven grant that this big woodcock may carry a good trail inside !'

'I'll warrant her for that,' said Jack Brimblecombe. 'She floats so low.'

'Much of your build, too, Jack. By the by, where is the commander ?'

Alas ! Don Pedro, forgotten in the bustle, had been lying on the deck in his shirt, helplessly bound, exhausting that part of his vocabulary which related to the unseen world. Which most discourteous act seemed at first likely to be somewhat heavily avenged on Amyas ; for as he spoke, a couple of caliver-shots, fired from under the poop, passed 'ping, ping' by his ears, and Cary clapped his hand to his side.

'Hurt, Will ?'

'A pinch, old lad—Look out, or we are *allen verloren* after all, as the Flemings say.'

And as he spoke, a rush forward on the poop drove two of their best men down the ladder into the waist, where Amyas stood.

'Killed ?' asked he, as he picked one up, who had fallen head over heels.

‘Sound as a bell, Sir: but they Gentiles has got hold of the firearms, and set the captain free.’

And rubbing the back of his head for a minute, he jumped up the ladder again, shouting—

‘Have at ye, idolatrous pagans! Have at ye, Satan’s spawn!’

Amyas jumped up after him, shouting to all hands to follow; for there was no time to be lost.

Out of the windows of the poop, which looked on the main deck, a galling fire had been opened, and he could not afford to lose men; for, as far as he knew, the Spaniards left on board might still far outnumber the English; so up he sprang on the poop, followed by a dozen men, and there began a very heavy fight between two parties of valiant warriors, who easily knew each other apart by the peculiar fashion of their armour. For the Spaniards fought in their shirts, and in no other garments: but the English in all other manner of garments, tag, rag, and bobtail; and yet had never a shirt between them.

The rest of the English made a rush, of course, to get upon the poop, seeing that the Spaniards could not shoot them through the deck: but the fire from the windows was so hot, that although they dodged behind masts, spars, and every possible shelter, one or two dropped; and Jack Brimblecombe and Yeo took on themselves to call a retreat, and with about a dozen men, got back, and held a council of war.

What was to be done? Their arquebuses were of little use; for the Spaniards were behind a strong bulkhead. There were cannon: but where was powder or shot? The boats, encouraged by the clamour on deck, were paddling alongside

again. Yeo rushed round and round, probing every gun with his sword.

‘Here’s a *patararo* loaded! Now for a match, lads.’

Luckily one of the English had kept his match alight during the scuffle.

‘Thanks be! Help me to unship the gun—the mast’s in the way here.’

The *patararo*, or brass swivel, was unshipped.

‘Steady, lads, and keep it level, or you’ll shake out the priming. Ship it here: turn out that one, and heave it into that boat, if they come alongside. Steady now—so! Rummage about, and find me a bolt or two, a marlin-spike, anything. Quick, or the captain will be over-mastered yet.’

Missiles were found—odds and ends—and crammed into the swivel up to the muzzle: and, in another minute, its ‘cargo of notions’ was crashing into the poop-windows, silencing the fire from thence effectually enough for the time.

‘Now, then, a rush forward, and right in along the deck!’ shouted Yeo; and the whole party charged through the cabin doors, which their shot had burst open, and hewed their way from room to room.

In the meanwhile, the Spaniards above had fought fiercely: but, in spite of superior numbers, they had gradually given back before the ‘demoniacal possession of those blasphemous heretics, who fought, not like men, but like furies from the pit.’ And by the time that Brimblecombe and Yeo shouted from the stern-gallery below that the quarter-deck was won, few on either side but had their shrewd scratch to show.

‘Yield, Señor!’ shouted Amyas to the com-

mander, who had been fighting like a lion, back to back with the captain of mariners.

‘Never! You have bound me, and insulted me! Your blood or mine must wipe out the stain!’

And he rushed on Amyas. There was a few moments’ heavy fence between them; and then Amyas cut right at his head. But as he raised his arm, the Spaniard’s blade slipped along his ribs, and snapped against the point of his shoulder-blade. An inch more to the left, and it would have been through his heart. The blow fell, nevertheless, and the commandant fell with it, stunned by the flat of the sword, but not wounded; for Amyas’s hand had turned, as he winced from his wound. But the sea-captain, seeing Amyas stagger, sprang at him, and, seizing him by the wrist, ere he could raise his sword again, shortened his weapon to run him through. Amyas made a grasp at his wrist in return, but, between his faintness and the darkness, missed it.—Another moment, and all would have been over!

A bright blade flashed close past Amyas’s ear: the sea-captain’s grasp loosened, and he dropped a corpse; while over him, like an angry lioness above her prey, stood Ayacanora, her long hair floating in the wind, her dagger raised aloft, as she looked round, challenging all and every one to approach.

‘Are you hurt?’ panted she.

‘A scratch, child.—What do you do here? Go back, go back.’

Ayacanora slipped back like a scolded child, and vanished in the darkness.

The battle was over. The Spaniards, seeing their commanders fall, laid down their arms, and

cried for quarter. It was given ; the poor fellows were tied together, two and two, and seated in a row on the deck ; the commandant, sorely bruised, yielded himself perforce ; and the galleon was taken.—*Westward Ho !*

## GEORGE ELIOT (MARY ANN CROSS)

1819-80

### MRS. POYSER 'HAS HER SAY OUT'

SHE always cited it afterwards as a case of prevision, which really had something more in it than her own remarkable penetration, that the moment she set eyes on the Squire, she said to herself, 'I shouldna wonder if he's come about that man as is a-going to take the Chase Farm, wanting Poyser to do something for him without pay. But Poyser's a fool if he does.'

Something unwonted must clearly be in the wind, for the old Squire's visits to his tenantry were rare ; and though Mrs. Poyser had during the last twelvemonth recited many imaginary speeches, meaning even more than met the ear, which she was quite determined to make to him the next time he appeared within the gates of the Hall Farm, the speeches had always remained imaginary.

'Good-day, Mrs. Poyser,' said the old Squire, peering at her with his short-sighted eyes—a mode of looking at her which, as Mrs. Poyser observed, 'allays aggravated her : it was as if you was a insect, and he was going to dab his finger-nail on you.'

However, she said, 'Your servant, sir,' and curtsied with an air of perfect deference as she advanced towards him: she was not the woman to misbehave towards her betters, and fly in the face of the catechism, without severe provocation.

'Is your husband at home, Mrs. Poyser?'

'Yes, sir; he's only i' the rick-yard. I'll send for him in a minute, if you'll please to get down and step in.'

'Thank you; I will do so. I want to consult him about a little matter; but you are quite as much concerned in it, if not more. I must have your opinion too.'

'Hetty, run and tell your uncle to come in,' said Mrs. Poyser, as they entered the house, and the old gentleman bowed low in answer to Hetty's curtsy; while Totty, conscious of a pinafore stained with gooseberry jam, stood hiding her face against the clock, and peeping round furtively.

'What a fine old kitchen this is!' said Mr. Donnithorne, looking round admiringly. He always spoke in the same deliberate, well-chiselled, polite way, whether his words were sugary or venomous. 'And you keep it so exquisitely clean, Mrs. Poyser. I like these premises, do you know, beyond any on the estate.'

'Well, sir, since you're fond of 'em, I should be glad if you'd let a bit o' repairs be done to 'em, for the boarding's i' that state, as we're like to be eaten up wi' rats and mice; and the cellar, you may stan' up to your knees i' water in 't, if you like to go down; but perhaps you'd rather believe my words. Won't you please to sit down, sir?'

'Not yet; I must see your dairy. I have not seen it for years, and I hear on all hands about

your fine cheese and butter,' said the Squire, looking politely unconscious that there could be any question on which he and Mrs. Poyser might happen to disagree. 'I think I see the door open, there: you must not be surprised if I cast a covetous eye on your cream and butter. I don't expect that Mrs. Satchell's cream and butter will bear comparison with yours.'

'I can't say, sir, I'm sure. It's seldom I see other folks's butter, though there's some on it as one's no need to see—the smell's enough.'

'Ah, now this I like,' said Mr. Donnithorne, looking round at the damp temple of cleanliness, but keeping near the door. 'I'm sure I should like my breakfast better if I knew the butter and cream came from this dairy. Thank you, that really is a pleasant sight. Unfortunately, my slight tendency to rheumatism makes me afraid of damp: I'll sit down in your comfortable kitchen. Ah, Poyser, how do you do? In the midst of business, I see, as usual. I've been looking at your wife's beautiful dairy—the best manager in the parish, is she not?'

Mr. Poyser had just entered in shirt-sleeves and open waistcoat, with a face a shade redder than usual, from the exertion of 'pitching'. As he stood, red, rotund, and radiant before the small, wiry, cool, old gentleman, he looked like a prize apple by the side of a withered crab.

'Will you please to take this chair, sir?' he said, lifting his father's arm-chair forward a little: 'you'll find it easy.'

'No, thank you, I never sit in easy-chairs,' said the old gentleman, seating himself on a small chair near the door. 'Do you know, Mrs. Poyser—sit

down, pray, both of you—I've been far from contented, for some time, with Mrs. Satchell's dairy management. I think she has not a good method, as you have.'

'Indeed, sir, I can't speak to that,' said Mrs. Poyser, in a hard voice, rolling and unrolling her knitting, and looking icily out of the window, as she continued to stand opposite the Squire. Poyser might sit down if he liked, she thought: *she* wasn't going to sit down, as if she'd give in to any such smooth-tongued palaver. Mr. Poyser, who looked and felt the reverse of icy, did sit down in his three-cornered chair.

'And now, Poyser, as Satchell is laid up, I am intending to let the Chase Farm to a respectable tenant. I'm tired of having a farm on my own hands—nothing is made the best of, in such cases, as you know. A satisfactory bailiff is hard to find; and I think you and I, Poyser, and your excellent wife here, can enter into a little arrangement in consequence, which will be to our mutual advantage.'

'Oh,' said Mr. Poyser, with a good-natured blankness of imagination as to the nature of the arrangement.

'If I am called upon to speak, sir,' said Mrs. Poyser, after glancing at her husband with pity at his softness, 'you know better than me; but I don't see what the Chase Farm is t' us—we've cumber enough wi' our own farm. Not but what I'm glad to hear o' anybody respectable coming into the parish; there's some as ha' been brought in as hasn't been looked on i' that character.'

'You're likely to find Mr. Thurle an excellent

neighbour, I assure you : such a one as you will feel glad to have accommodated by the little plan I'm going to mention ; especially as I hope you will find it as much to your own advantage as his.'

' Indeed, sir, if it's anything to our advantage, it'll be the first offer o' the sort I've heard on. It's them as take advantage that get advantage i' this world, *I* think : folks have to wait long enough afore it's brought to 'em.'

' The fact is, Poyser,' said the Squire, ignoring Mrs. Poyser's theory of worldly prosperity, ' there is too much dairy land, and too little plough land, on the Chase Farm, to suit Thurle's purpose—indeed, he will only take the farm on condition of some change in it : his wife, it appears, is not a clever dairy-woman, like yours. Now, the plan I'm thinking of is to effect a little exchange. If you were to have the Hollow Pastures, you might increase your dairy, which must be so profitable under your wife's management ; and I should request you, Mrs. Poyser, to supply my house with milk, cream, and butter at the market prices. On the other hand, Poyser, you might let Thurle have the Lower and Upper Ridges, which really, with our wet seasons, would be a good riddance for you. There is much less risk in dairy land than corn land.'

Mr. Poyser was leaning forward, with his elbows on his knees, his head on one side, and his mouth screwed up—apparently absorbed in making the tips of his fingers meet so as to represent with perfect accuracy the ribs of a ship. He was much too acute a man not to see through the whole business, and to foresee perfectly what would be his wife's view of the subject ; but he disliked

giving unpleasant answers: unless it was on a point of farming practice, he would rather give up than have a quarrel, any day; and, after all, it mattered more to his wife than to him. So, after a few moments' silence, he looked up at her and said mildly, 'What dost say?'

Mrs. Poyser had had her eyes fixed on her husband with cold severity during his silence, but now she turned away her head with a toss, looked icily at the opposite roof of the cow-shed, and spearing her knitting together with the loose pin, held it firmly between her clasped hands.

'Say? Why, I say you may do as you like about giving up any o' your corn land afore your lease is up, which it won't be for a year come next Michaelmas, but I'll not consent to take more dairy work into my hands, either for love or money; and there's nayther love nor money here, as I can see, on'y other folks's love o' theirselves, and the money as is to go into other folks's pockets. I know there's them as is born t' own the land, and them as is born to sweat on't'—here Mrs. Poyser paused to gasp a little—'and I know it's christened folks's duty to submit to their betters as fur as flesh and blood 'ull bear it; but I'll not make a martyr o' myself, and wear myself to skin and bone, and worret myself as if I was a churn wi' butter a-coming in 't, for no landlord in England, not if he was King George himself.'

'No, no, my dear Mrs. Poyser, certainly not,' said the Squire, still confident in his own powers of persuasion, 'you must not overwork yourself; but don't you think your work will rather be lessened than increased in this way? There is so much milk required at the Abbey, that you will

have little increase of cheese and butter making from the addition to your dairy; and I believe selling the milk is the most profitable way of disposing of dairy produce, is it not?’

‘Ay, that ’s true,’ said Mr. Poyser, unable to repress an opinion on a question of farming profits, and forgetting that it was not in this case a purely abstract question.

‘I daresay,’ said Mrs. Poyser bitterly, turning her head half-way towards her husband, and looking at the vacant arm-chair—‘I daresay it ’s true for men as sit i’ th’ chimney-corner and make believe as everything ’s cut wi’ ins an’ outs to fit int’ everything else. If you could make a pudding wi’ thinking o’ the batter, it ’ud be easy getting dinner. How do I know whether the milk ’ull be wanted constant? What ’s to make me sure as the house won’t be put o’ board wage afore we’re many months older, and then I may have to lie awake o’ nights wi’ twenty gallons o’ milk on my mind—and Dingall ’ull take no more butter, let alone paying for it; and we must fat pigs till we’re obliged to beg the butcher on our knees to buy ’em, and lose half of ’em wi’ the measles. And there ’s the fetching and carrying, as ’ud be welly half a day’s work for a man an’ hoss—*that* ’s to be took out o’ the profits, I reckon? But there ’s folks ’ud hold a sieve under the pump and expect to carry away the water.’

‘That difficulty—about the fetching and carrying—you will not have, Mrs. Poyser,’ said the Squire, who thought that this entrance into particulars indicated a distant inclination to compromise on Mrs. Poyser’s part—‘Bethell will do that regularly with the cart and pony.’

'Oh, sir, begging your pardon, I've never been used t' having gentlefolks's servants coming about my back places, a-making love to both the gells at once, and keeping 'em with their hands on their hips listening to all manner o' gossip when they should be down on their knees a-scouring. If we're to go to ruin, it shanna be wi' having our back kitchen turned into a public.'

'Well, Poyser,' said the Squire, shifting his tactics, and looking as if he thought Mrs. Poyser had suddenly withdrawn from the proceedings and left the room, 'you can turn the Hollows into feeding land. I can easily make another arrangement about supplying my house. And I shall not forget your readiness to accommodate your landlord as well as a neighbour. I know you will be glad to have your lease renewed for three years, when the present one expires; otherwise, I daresay Thurle, who is a man of some capital, would be glad to take both the farms, as they could be worked so well together. But I don't want to part with an old tenant like you.'

To be thrust out of the discussion in this way would have been enough to complete Mrs. Poyser's exasperation, even without the final threat. Her husband, really alarmed at the possibility of their leaving the old place where he had been bred and born—for he believed the old Squire had small spite enough for anything—was beginning a mild remonstrance explanatory of the inconvenience he should find in having to buy and sell more stock, with—

'Well, sir, I think as it's rether hard' . . . when Mrs. Poyser burst in with the desperate determination to have her say out this once, though it were

to rain notices to quit, and the only shelter were the workhouse.

‘Then, sir, if I may speak—as, for all I’m a woman and there’s folks as thinks a woman’s fool enough to stan’ by an’ look on while the men sign her soul away, I’ve a right to speak, for I make one quarter o’ the rent, and save th’ other quarter—I say, if Mr. Thurle’s so ready to take farms under you, it’s a pity but what he should take this, and see if he likes to live in a house wi’ all the plagues o’ Egypt in’t—wi’ the cellar full o’ water, and frogs and toads hoppin’ up the steps by dozens—and the floors rotten, and the rats and mice gnawing every bit o’ cheese, and runnin’ over our heads as we lie i’ bed till we expect ’em to eat us up alive—as it’s a mercy they hanna eat the children long ago. I should like to see if there’s another tenant besides Poyser as ’ud put up wi’ never having a bit o’ repairs done till a place tumbles down—and not then, on’y wi’ begging and praying, and having to pay half—and being strung up wi’ the rent as it’s much if he gets enough out o’ the land to pay, for all he’s put his own money into the ground beforehand. See if you’ll get a stranger to lead such a life here as that: a maggot must be born i’ the rotten cheese to like it, I reckon. You may run away from my words, sir,’ continued Mrs. Poyser, following the old squire beyond the door—for after the first moments of stunned surprise he had got up, and, waving his hand towards her with a smile, had walked out towards his pony. But it was impossible for him to get away immediately, for John was walking the pony up and down the yard, and was some distance from the causeway when his master beckoned.

'You may run away from my words, sir, and you may go spinning' underhand ways o' doing us a mischief, for you've got Old Harry to your friend, though nobody else is, but I tell you for once as we're not dumb creatures to be abused and made money on by them as ha' got the lash i' their hands, for want o' knowing how t' undo the tackle. An' if I'm the only one as speaks my mind, there's plenty o' the same way o' thinking i' this parish and the next to't, for your name's no better than a brimstone match in everybody's nose—if it isna two-three old folks as you think o' saving your soul by giving 'em a bit o' flannel and a drop o' porridge. An' you may be right i' thinking it'll take but little to save your soul, for it'll be the smallest savin' y' iver made, wi' all your scrapin'.'

There are occasions on which two servant-girls and a wagoner may be a formidable audience, and as the Squire rode away on his black pony, even the gift of short-sightedness did not prevent him from being aware that Molly, and Nancy, and Tim were grinning not far from him. Perhaps he suspected that sour old John was grinning behind him—which was also the fact. Meanwhile the bull-dog, the black-and-tan terrier, Alick's sheep-dog, and the gander hissing at a safe distance from the pony's heels, carried out the idea of Mrs. Poyser's solo in an impressive quartet.

Mrs. Poyser, however, had no sooner seen the pony move off than she turned round, gave the two hilarious damsels a look which drove them into the back kitchen, and unspearing her knitting, began to knit again with her usual rapidity, as she re-entered the house.

‘Thee ’st done it now,’ said Mr. Poyser, a little alarmed and uneasy, but not without some triumphant amusement at his wife’s outbreak.

‘Yes, I know I’ve done it,’ said Mrs. Poyser; ‘but I’ve had my say out, and I shall be th’ easier for ’t all my life. There’s no pleasure i’ living, if you’re to be corked up for ever, and only dribble your mind out by the sly, like a leaky barrel. I shan’t repent saying what I think, if I live to be as old as th’ old Squire; and there’s little likelihoods—for it seems as if them as aren’t wanted here are th’ only folks as aren’t wanted i’ th’ other world.’

‘But thee wutna like moving from th’ old place this Michaelmas twelvemonth,’ said Mr. Poyser, ‘and going into a strange parish, where thee know’st nobody. It’ll be hard upon us both, and upo’ father too.’

‘Eh, it’s no use worreting; there’s plenty o’ things may happen between this and Michaelmas twelvemonth. The Captain may be master afore then, for what we know,’ said Mrs. Poyser, inclined to take an unusually hopeful view of an embarrassment which had been brought about by her own merit, and not by other people’s fault.

‘*I’m* none for worreting,’ said Mr. Poyser, rising from his three-cornered chair, and walking slowly towards the door; ‘but I should be loath to leave the old place, and the parish where I was bred and born, and father afore me. We should leave our roots behind us, I doubt, and niver thrive again.’—*Adam Bede.*

## MR. TULLIVER DECLARES HIS RESOLUTION ABOUT TOM

‘WHAT I want, you know,’ said Mr. Tulliver—‘what I want is to give Tom a good eddication; an eddication as ’ll be a bread to him. That was what I was thinking of when I gave notice for him to leave the academy at Ladyday. I mean to put him to a downright good school at Midsummer. The two years at th’ academy ’ud ha’ done well enough, if I’d meant to make a miller and farmer of him, for he’s had a fine sight more schoolin’ nor *I* ever got: all the learnin’ *my* father ever paid for was a bit o’ birch at one end and the alphabet at th’ other. But I should like Tom to be a bit of a scholar, so as he might be up to the tricks o’ these fellows as talk fine and write with a flourish. It ’ud be a help to me wi’ these lawsuits, and arbitrations, and things. I wouldn’t make a downright lawyer o’ the lad—I should be sorry for him to be a raskill—but a sort o’ engineer, or a surveyor, or an auctioneer and vallyer, like Riley, or one o’ them smartish businesses as are all profits and no outlay, only for a big watch-chain and a high stool. They’re pretty nigh all one, and they’re not far off being even wi’ the law, *I* believe; for Riley looks Lawyer Wakem i’ the face as hard as one cat looks another. *He’s* none frightened at him.’

Mr. Tulliver was speaking to his wife, a blond comely woman in a fan-shaped cap (I am afraid to think how long it is since fan-shaped caps were worn—they must be so near coming in again. At that time, when Mrs. Tulliver was nearly forty, they were new at St. Ogg’s, and considered sweet things).

‘ Well, Mr. Tulliver, you know best : *I’ve* no objections. But hadn’t I better kill a couple o’ fowl and have th’ aunts and uncles to dinner next week, so as you may hear what sister Glegg and sister Pullet have got to say about it ? There’s a couple o’ fowl *wants* killing ! ’

‘ You may kill every fowl i’ the yard, if you like, Bessy ; but I shall ask neither aunt nor uncle what I’m to do wi’ my own lad,’ said Mr. Tulliver, defiantly.

‘ Dear heart ! ’ said Mrs. Tulliver, shocked at this sanguinary rhetoric, ‘ how can you talk so, Mr. Tulliver ? But it’s your way to speak disrespectful o’ my family ; and sister Glegg throws all the blame upo’ me, though I’m sure I’m as innocent as the babe unborn. For nobody’s ever heard *me* say as it wasn’t lucky for my children to have aunts and uncles as can live independent. Howiver, if Tom’s to go to a new school, I should like him to go where I can wash him and mend him ; else he might as well have calico as linen, for they’d be one as yallow as th’ other before they’d been washed half-a-dozen times. And then, when the box is goin’ backards and forrards, I could send the lad a cake, or a pork-pie, or an apple ; for he can do with an extry bit, bless him, whether they stint him at the meals or no. My children can eat as much victuals as most, thank God.’

‘ Well, well, we won’t send him out o’ reach o’ the carrier’s cart, if other things fit in,’ said Mr. Tulliver. ‘ But you mustn’t put a spoke i’ the wheel about the washin,’ if we can’t get a school near enough. That’s the fault I have to find wi’ you, Bessie ; if you see a stick i’ the road, you’re allays thinkin’ you can’t step over it. You’d want me not to hire

a good wagoner, 'cause he'd got a mole on his face.'

'Dear heart!' said Mrs. Tulliver, in mild surprise, 'when did I iver make objections to a man because he'd got a mole on his face? I'm sure I'm rether fond o' the moles; for my brother, as is dead an' gone, had a mole on his brow. But I can't remember your iver offering to hire a wagoner with a mole, Mr. Tulliver. There was John Gibbs hadn't a mole on his face no more nor you have, an' I was all for having you hire *him*; an' so you did hire him, an' if he hadn't died o' the inflammation, as we paid Dr. Turnbull for attending him, he'd very like ha' been driving the wagon now. He might have a mole somewhere out o' sight, but how was I to know that, Mr. Tulliver?'

'No, no, Bessy; I didn't mean justly the mole; I meant it to stand for summat else; but niver mind—it's puzzling work, talking is. What I'm thinking on, is how to find the right sort o' school to send Tom to, for I might be ta'en in again, as I've been wi' th' academy. I'll have nothing to do wi' a 'cademy again: whatever school I send Tom to, it shan't be a 'cademy; it shall be a place where the lads spend their time i' summat else besides blacking the family's shoes, and getting up the potatoes. It's an uncommon puzzling thing to know what school to pick.'

Mr. Tulliver paused a minute or two, and dived with both hands into his breeches pockets as if he hoped to find some suggestion there. Apparently he was not disappointed, for he presently said, 'I know what I'll do—I'll talk it over wi' Riley; he's coming to morrow, t' arbitrate about the dam.'

'Well, Mr. Tulliver, I've put the sheets out for

the best bed, and Kezia's got 'em hanging by the fire. They aren't the best sheets, but they 'regood enough for anybody to sleep in, be he who he will ; for as for them best Holland sheets, I should repent buying 'em, only they'll do to lay us out in. An' if you was to die to-morrow, Mr. Tulliver, they're mangled beautiful, an' all ready, an' smell o' lavender as it 'ud be a pleasure to lay 'em out ; an' they lie at the left-hand corner o' the big oak linen-chest at the back : not as I should trust anybody to look 'em out but myself.'

As Mrs. Tulliver uttered the last sentence, she drew a bright bunch of keys from her pocket, and singled out one, rubbing her thumb and finger up and down it with a placid smile while she looked at the clear fire. If Mr. Tulliver had been a susceptible man in his conjugal relation, he might have supposed that she drew out the key to aid her imagination in anticipating the moment when he would be in a state to justify the production of the best Holland sheets. Happily he was not so ; he was only susceptible in respect of his right to water-power ; moreover, he had the marital habit of not listening very closely, and since his mention of Mr. Riley, had been apparently occupied in a tactile examination of his woollen stockings.

' I think I've hit it, Bessy,' was his first remark after a short silence. ' Riley's as likely a man as any to know o' some school ; he's had schooling himself, an' goes about to all sorts o' places—arbitratin' and vallyin' and that. And we shall have time to talk it over to-morrow night when the business is done. I want Tom to be such a sort o' man as Riley, you know—as can talk pretty nigh as well as if it was all wrote out for him, and

knows a good lot o' words as don't mean much, so as you can't lay hold of 'em i' law; and a good solid knowledge o' business too.'

'Well,' said Mrs. Tulliver, 'so far as talking proper, and knowing everything, and walking with a bend in his back, and setting his hair up, I shouldn't mind the lad being brought up to that. But them fine-talking men from the big towns mostly wear the false shirt-fronts; they wear a frill till it's all a mess, and then hide it with a bib; I know Riley does. And then, if Tom's to go and live at Mudport, like Riley, he'll have a house with a kitchen hardly big enough to turn in, an' niver get a fresh egg for his breakfast, an' sleep up three pair o' stairs—or four, for what I know—an' be burnt to death before he can get down.'

'No, no,' said Mr. Tulliver, 'I've no thoughts of his going to Mudport: I mean him to set up his office at St. Ogg's, close by us, an' live at home. But,' continued Mr. Tulliver after a pause, 'what I'm a bit afraid on is, as Tom hasn't got the right sort o' brains for a smart fellow. I doubt he's a bit slowish. He takes after your family, Bessy.'

'Yes, that he does,' said Mrs. Tulliver, accepting the last proposition entirely on its own merits; 'he's wonderful for liking a deal o' salt in his broth. That was my brother's way, and my father's before him.'

'It seems a bit of a pity, though,' said Mr. Tulliver, 'as the lad should take after the mother's side i'stead o' the little wench. That's the worst on't wi' the crossing o' breeds: you can never justly calkilate what'll come on't. The little un takes after my side, now: she's twice as 'cute as Tom. Too 'cute for a woman, I'm afraid,' con-

tinued Mr. Tulliver, turning his head dubiously first on one side and then on the other. 'It's no mischief much while she's a little un, but an over-'cute woman's no better nor a long-tailed sheep—she'll fetch none the bigger price for that.'

'Yes, it is a mischief while she's a little un, Mr. Tulliver, for it all runs to naughtiness. How to keep her in a clean pinafore two hours together passes my cunning. An' now you put me i' mind,' continued Mrs. Tulliver, rising and going to the window, 'I don't know where she is now, an' it's pretty nigh tea-time. Ah, I thought so—wanderin' up an' down by the water, like a wild thing: she'll tumble in some day.'

Mrs. Tulliver rapped the window sharply, beckoned, and shook her head,—a process which she repeated more than once before she returned to her chair.

'You talk o' 'cuteness, Mr. Tulliver,' she observed as she sat down, 'but I'm sure the child's half an idiot i' some things; for if I send her upstairs to fetch anything, she forgets what she's gone for, an' perhaps 'ull sit down on the floor i' the sunshine an' plait her hair an' sing to herself like a Bedlam creatur', all the while I'm waiting for her downstairs. That niver run i' my family, thank God, no more nor a brown skin as makes her look like a mulatter. I don't like to fly i' the face o' Providence, but it seems hard as I should have but one gell, an' her so comical.'

'Pooh, nonsense!' said Mr. Tulliver, 'she's a straight black-eyed wench as anybody need wish to see. I don't know i' what she's behind other folks's children; and she can read almost as well as the parson.'

‘ But her hair won’t curl all I can do with it, and she ’s so franzy about having it put i’ paper, and I’ve such work as never was to make her stand and have it pinched with th’ irons.’

‘ Cut it off—cut it off short,’ said the father rashly.

‘ How can you talk so, Mr. Tulliver ? She ’s too big a gell, gone nine, and tall of her age, to have her hair cut short ; an’ there ’s her cousin Lucy’s got a row o’ curls round her head, an’ not a hair out o’ place. It seems hard as my sister Deane should have that pretty child ; I’m sure Lucy takes more after me nor my own child does. Maggie, Maggie,’ continued the mother, in a tone of half-coaxing fretfulness, as this small mistake of nature entered the room, ‘ where ’s the use o’ my telling you to keep away from the water ? You’ll tumble in and be drowned some day, an’ then you’ll be sorry you didn’t do as mother told you.’

Maggie’s hair, as she threw off her bonnet, painfully confirmed her mother’s accusation : Mrs. Tulliver, desiring her daughter to have a curled crop, ‘ like other folks’s children,’ had had it cut too short in front to be pushed behind the ears ; and as it was usually straight an hour after it had been taken out of paper, Maggie was incessantly tossing her head to keep the dark heavy locks out of her gleaming black eyes—an action which gave her very much the air of a small Shetland pony.

‘ O dear, O dear, Maggie, what are you thinkin of, to throw your bonnet down there ? Take it upstairs, there ’s a good gell, an’ let your hair be brushed, an’ put your other pinafore on, an’ change your shoes—do, for shame ; an’ come an’ go on with your patchwork, like a little lady.’

‘ O mother,’ said Maggie, in a vehemently cross tone, ‘ I don’t *want* to do my patchwork.’

‘ What ! not your pretty patchwork, to make a counterpane for your aunt Glegg ? ’

‘ It’s foolish work,’ said Maggie, with a toss of her mane, ‘ tearing things to pieces to sew ’em together again. And I don’t want to do anything for my aunt Glegg—I don’t like her.’

Exit Maggie, dragging her bonnet by the string, while Mr. Tulliver laughs audibly.

‘ I wonder at you, as you’ll laugh at her, Mr. Tulliver,’ said the mother, with feeble fretfulness in her tone. ‘ You encourage her i’ naughtiness. An’ her aunts will have it as it’s me spoils her.’

Mrs. Tulliver was what is called a good-tempered person—never cried, when she was a baby, on any slighter ground than hunger and pins ; and from the cradle upwards had been healthy, fair, plump, and dull-witted ; in short, the flower of her family for beauty and amiability. But milk and mildness are not the best things for keeping, and when they turn only a little sour, they may disagree with young stomachs seriously. I have often wondered whether those early Madonnas of Raphael, with the blonde faces and somewhat stupid expression, kept their placidity undisturbed when their strong-limbed, strong-willed boys got a little too old to do without clothing. I think they must have been given to feeble remonstrance, getting more and more peevish as it became more and more ineffectual.—*The Mill on the Floss.*

## TITO AND HIS ADOPTIVE FATHER BALDASSARRE

### (i) A MAN'S RANSOM

AND that was not the whole of Tito's good fortune ; for he had sold all his jewels, except the ring he did not choose to part with, and he was master of full five hundred gold florins.

Yet the moment when he first had this sum in his possession was the crisis of the first serious struggle his facile, good-humoured nature had known. An importunate thought, of which he had till now refused to see more than the shadow as it dogged his footsteps, at last rushed upon him and grasped him : he was obliged to pause and decide whether he would surrender and obey, or whether he would give the refusal that must carry irrevocable consequences. It was in the room above Nello's shop, which Tito had now hired as a lodging, that the elder Cennini handed him the last quota of the sum on behalf of Bernardo Rucellai, the purchaser of the two most valuable gems.

'*Ecco, giovane mio !*' said the respectable printer and goldsmith, 'you have now a pretty little fortune ; and if you will take my advice, you will let me place your florins in a safe quarter, where they may increase and multiply, instead of slipping through your fingers for banquets and other follies which are rife among our Florentine youth. And it has been too much the fashion of scholars, especially when, like our Pietro Crinito, they think their scholarship needs to be scented and brodered, to squander with one hand till they have been fain to beg with the other. I have

brought you the money, and you are free to make a wise choice or an unwise : I shall see on which side the balance dips. We Florentines hold no man a member of an Art till he has shown his skill and been matriculated ; and no man is matriculated to the art of life till he has been well tempted. If you make up your mind to put your florins out to usury, you can let me know to-morrow. A scholar may marry, and should have something in readiness for the *morgen-cap*.<sup>1</sup> Addio.'

As Cennini closed the door behind him, Tito turned round with the smile dying out of his face, and fixed his eyes on the table where the florins lay. He made no other movement, but stood with his thumbs in his belt, looking down, in that transfixed state which accompanies the concentration of consciousness on some inward image.

'A man's ransom !'—who was it that had said five hundred florins was more than a man's ransom? If now, under this mid-day sun, on some hot coast far away, a man somewhat stricken in years—a man not without high thoughts and with the most passionate heart—a man who long years ago had rescued a little boy from a life of beggary, filth, and cruel wrong, had reared him tenderly, and been to him as a father—if that man were now under this summer sun toiling as a slave, hewing wood and drawing water, perhaps being smitten and buffeted because he was not deft and active? If he were saying to himself, 'Tito will find me : he had but to carry our manuscripts and gems to Venice ; he will have raised money, and will never rest till he finds me out' ? If that were

<sup>1</sup> A sum given by the bridegroom to the bride the day after the marriage (*Morgengabe*).

certain, could he, Tito, see the price of the gems lying before him, and say, 'I will stay at Florence, where I am fanned by soft airs of promised love and prosperity; I will not risk myself for his sake'? No, surely not, *if it were certain*. But nothing could be farther from certainty. The galley had been taken by a Turkish vessel on its way to Delos: *that* was known by the report of the companion galley, which had escaped. But there had been resistance, and probable bloodshed; a man had been seen falling overboard: who were the survivors, and what had befallen them amongst all the multitude of possibilities? Had not he, Tito, suffered shipwreck, and narrowly escaped drowning? He had good cause for feeling the omnipresence of casualties that threatened all projects with futility. The rumour that there were pirates who had a settlement in Delos was not to be depended on, or might be nothing to the purpose. What, probably enough, would be the result if he were to quit Florence and go to Venice; get authoritative letters—yes, he knew that might be done—and set out for the Archipelago? Why, that he should be himself seized, and spend all his florins on preliminaries, and be again a destitute wanderer—with no more gems to sell.

Tito had a clearer vision of that result than of the possible moment when he might find his father again, and carry him deliverance. It would surely be an unfairness that he, in his full ripe youth, to whom life had hitherto had some of the stint and subjection of a school, should turn his back on promised love and distinction, and perhaps never be visited by that promise again. 'And yet,' he said to himself, 'if I were certain that Baldassarre

Calvo was alive, and that I could free him, by whatever exertions or perils, I would go now—now I have the money: it was useless to debate the matter before. I would go now to Bardo and Bartolommeo Scala, and tell them the whole truth.’ Tito did not say to himself so distinctly that if those two men had known the whole truth he was aware there would have been no alternative for him but to go in search of his benefactor, who, if alive, was the rightful owner of the gems, and whom he had always equivocally spoken of as ‘lost’; he did not say to himself, what he was not ignorant of, that Greeks of distinction had made sacrifices, taken voyages again and again, and sought help from crowned and mitred heads for the sake of freeing relatives from slavery to the Turks. Public opinion did not regard this as exceptional virtue.

This was his first real colloquy with himself: he had gone on following the impulses of the moment, and one of those impulses had been to conceal half the fact; he had never considered this part of his conduct long enough to face the consciousness of his motives for the concealment. What was the use of telling the whole? It was true, the thought had crossed his mind several times since he had quitted Nauplia that, after all, it was a great relief to be quit of Baldassarre, and he would have liked to know *who* it was that had fallen overboard. But such thoughts spring inevitably out of a relation that is irksome. Baldassarre was exacting, and had got stranger as he got older: he was constantly scrutinizing Tito’s mind to see whether it answered to his own exaggerated expectations; and age—the age of a thick-set, heavy-browed

bald man beyond sixty, whose intensity and eagerness in the grasp of ideas have long taken the character of monotony and repetition, may be looked at from many points of view without being found attractive. Such a man, stranded among new acquaintances, unless he had the philosopher's stone, would hardly find rank, youth, and beauty at his feet. The feelings that gather fervour from novelty will be of little help towards making the world a home for dimmed and faded human beings ; and if there is any love of which they are not widowed, it must be the love that is rooted in memories and distils perpetually the sweet balms of fidelity and forbearing tenderness.

But surely such memories were not absent from Tito's mind ? Far in the backward vista of his remembered life, when he was only seven years old, Baldassarre had rescued him from blows, had taken him to a home that seemed like opened paradise, where there was sweet food and soothing caresses, all had on Baldassarre's knee ; and from that time till the hour they had parted, Tito had been the one centre of Baldassarre's fatherly cares.

And he had been docile, pliable, quick of apprehension, ready to acquire : a very bright lovely boy, a youth of even splendid grace, who seemed quite without vices, as if that beautiful form represented a vitality so exquisitely poised and balanced that it could know no uneasy desires, no unrest—a radiant presence for a lonely man to have won for himself. If he were silent when his father expected some response, still he did not look moody ; if he declined some labour—why, he flung himself down with such a charming, half-smiling, half-pleading air, that the pleasure of looking at him made

amends to one who had watched his growth with a sense of claim and possession: the curves of Tito's mouth had ineffable good humour in them. And then, the quick talent to which everything came readily, from philosophical systems to the rhymes of a street ballad caught up at a hearing! Would any one have said that Tito had not made a rich return to his benefactor, or that his gratitude and affection would fail on any great demand?

He did not admit that his gratitude had failed; but *it was not certain* that Baldassarre was in slavery, not certain that he was living.

'Do I not owe something to myself?' said Tito, inwardly, with a slight movement of his shoulders, the first he had made since he had turned to look down at the florins. 'Before I quit everything, and incur again all the risks of which I am even now weary, I must at least have a reasonable hope. Am I to spend my life in a wandering search? *I believe he is dead.* Cennini was right about my florins: I will place them in his hands to-morrow.'

## (ii) BALDASSARRE'S ESCAPE

Meanwhile in the grey light of the unadorned streets there were oncomers who made no show of linen and brocade, and whose humour was far from merry. Here, too, the French dress and hoofed shoes were conspicuous, but they were being pressed upon by a larger and larger number of non-admiring Florentines. In the van of the crowd were three men in scanty clothing; each had his hands bound together by a cord, and a rope was fastened round his neck and body, in such

a way that he who held the extremity of the rope might easily check any rebellious movement by the threat of throttling. The men who held the ropes were French soldiers, and by broken Italian phrases and strokes from the knotted end of the rope, they from time to time stimulated their prisoners to beg. Two of them were obedient, and to every Florentine they had encountered had held out their bound hands and said in piteous tones,—

‘For the love of God and the Holy Madonna, give us something towards our ransom! We are Tuscans: we were made prisoners in Lunigiana.’

But the third man remained obstinately silent under all the strokes from the knotted cord. He was very different in aspect from his two fellow-prisoners. They were young and hardy, and, in the scant clothing which the avarice of their captors had left them, looked like vulgar, sturdy mendicants. But he had passed the boundary of old age, and could hardly be less than four or five and sixty. His beard, which had grown long in neglect, and the hair which fell thick and straight round his baldness, were nearly white. His thickset figure was still firm and upright, though emaciated, and seemed to express energy in spite of age—an expression that was partly carried out in the dark eyes and strong dark eyebrows, which had a strangely isolated intensity of colour in the midst of his yellow, bloodless, deep-wrinkled face with its lank grey hairs. And yet there was something fitful in the eyes which contradicted the occasional flash of energy: after looking round with quick fierceness at windows and faces, they fell again with a lost and wandering look. But his lips were

motionless, and he held his hands resolutely down. He would not beg.

This sight had been witnessed by the Florentines with growing exasperation. Many standing at their doors or passing quietly along had at once given money—some in half-automatic response to an appeal in the name of God, others in that unquestioning awe of the French soldiery which had been created by the reports of their cruel warfare, and on which the French themselves counted as a guarantee of immunity in their acts of insolence. But as the group had proceeded farther into the heart of the city, that compliance had gradually disappeared, and the soldiers found themselves escorted by a gathering troop of men and boys, who kept up a chorus of exclamations sufficiently intelligible to foreign ears without any interpreter. The soldiers themselves began to dislike their position, for, with a strong inclination to use their weapons, they were checked by the necessity for keeping a secure hold on their prisoners, and they were now hurrying along in the hope of finding shelter in a hostelry.

‘French dogs!’ ‘Bullock-feet!’ ‘Snatch their pikes from them!’ ‘Cut the cords and make them run for their prisoners. They’ll run as fast as geese—don’t you see they’re web-footed?’ These were the cries which the soldiers vaguely understood to be jeers, and probably threats. But everyone seemed disposed to give invitations of this spirited kind rather than to act upon them.

‘Santiddio! here’s a sight!’ said the dyer, as soon as he had divined the meaning of the advancing tumult, ‘and the fools do nothing but hoot. Come along!’ he added, snatching his

axe from his belt, and running to join the crowd, followed by the butcher and all the rest of his companions except Goro, who hastily retreated up a narrow passage.

The sight of the dyer, running forward with blood-red arms and axe uplifted, and with his cluster of rough companions behind him, had a stimulating effect on the crowd. Not that he did anything else than pass beyond the soldiers and thrust himself well among his fellow-citizens, flourishing his axe; but he served as a stirring symbol of street-fighting, like the waving of a well-known gonfalon. And the first sign that fire was ready to burst out was something as rapid as a little leaping tongue of flame: it was an act of the conjuror's impish lad Lollo, who was dancing and jeering in front of the ingenuous boys that made the majority of the crowd. Lollo had no great compassion for the prisoners, but being conscious of an excellent knife which was his unfailing companion, it had seemed to him from the first that to jump forward, cut a rope, and leap back again before the soldier who held it could use his weapon, would be an amusing and dexterous piece of mischief. And now, when the people began to hoot and jostle more vigorously, Lollo felt that his moment was come—he was close to the eldest prisoner; in an instant he had cut the cord.

‘Run, old one!’ he piped in the prisoner’s ear, as soon as the cord was in two; and himself set the example of running as if he were helped along with wings, like a scared fowl.

The prisoner’s sensations were not too slow for him to seize the opportunity: the idea of escape

had been continually present with him, and he had gathered fresh hope from the temper of the crowd. He ran at once; but his speed would hardly have sufficed for him if the Florentines had not instantaneously rushed between him and his captor. He ran on into the piazza, but he quickly heard the tramp of feet behind him, for the other two prisoners had been released, and the soldiers were struggling and fighting their way after them, in such tardigrade fashion as their hoof-shaped shoes would allow—impeded, but not very resolutely attacked, by the people. One of the two younger prisoners turned up the Borgo di San Lorenzo, and thus made a partial diversion of the hubbub; but the main struggle was still towards the piazza, where all eyes were turned on it with alarmed curiosity. The cause could not be precisely guessed, for the French dress was screened by the impeding crowd.

‘An escape of prisoners,’ said Lorenzo Tornabuoni, as he and his party turned round just against the steps of the Duomo, and saw a prisoner rushing by them. ‘The people are not content with having emptied the Bargello the other day. If there is no other authority in sight they must fall on the sbirri and secure freedom to thieves. Ah! there is a French soldier: that is more serious.’

The soldier he saw was struggling along on the north side of the piazza, but the object of his pursuit had taken the other direction. That object was the eldest prisoner, who had wheeled round the Baptistery and was running towards the Duomo, determined to take refuge in that sanctuary rather than trust to his speed. But in

mounting the steps, his foot received a shock ; he was precipitated towards the group of signori, whose backs were turned to him, and was only able to recover his balance as he clutched one of them by the arm.

It was Tito Melema who felt that clutch. He turned his head, and saw the face of his adoptive father, Baldassarre Calvo, close to his own.

The two men looked at each other, silent as death : Baldassarre, with dark fierceness and a tightening grip of the soiled worn hands on the velvet-clad arm ; Tito, with cheeks and lips all bloodless, fascinated by terror. It seemed a long while to them—it was but a moment.

The first sound Tito heard was the short laugh of Piero di Cosimo, who stood close by him and was the only person that could see his face.

‘ Ha, ha ! I know what a ghost should be now.’

‘ This is another escaped prisoner,’ said Lorenzo Tornabuoni. ‘ Who is he, I wonder ? ’

‘ *Some madman, surely,*’ said Tito.

He hardly knew how the words had come to his lips : there are moments when our passions speak and decide for us, and we seem to stand by and wonder. They carry in them an inspiration of crime, that in one instant does the work of long premeditation.

The two men had not taken their eyes off each other, and it seemed to Tito, when he had spoken, that some magical poison had darted from Baldassarre’s eyes, and that he felt it rushing through his veins. But the next instant the grasp on his arm had relaxed, and Baldassarre had disappeared within the church.

## (iii) WAITING BY THE RIVER

About the time when the two Compagnacci went on their errand, there was another man who, on the opposite side of the Arno, was also going out into the chill grey twilight. His errand, apparently, could have no relation to theirs ; he was making his way to the brink of the river at a spot which, though within the city walls, was overlooked by no dwellings, and which only seemed the more shrouded and lonely for the warehouses and granaries which at some little distance backward turned their shoulders to the river. There was a sloping width of long grass and rushes made all the more dank by broad gutters which here and there emptied themselves into the Arno.

The gutters and the loneliness were the attraction that drew this man to come and sit down among the grass, and bend over the waters that ran swiftly in the channelled slope at his side. For he had once had a large piece of bread brought to him by one of those friendly runlets, and more than once a raw carrot and apple parings. It was worth while to wait for such chances in a place where there was no one to see, and often in his restless wakefulness he came to watch here before day-break ; it might save him for one day the need of that silent begging which consisted in sitting on a church step by the wayside out beyond the Porta San Frediano.

For Baldassarre hated begging so much that he would perhaps have chosen to die rather than make even that silent appeal, but for one reason that made him desire to live. It was no longer a hope ; it was only that possibility which clings

to every idea that has taken complete possession of the mind : the sort of possibility that makes a woman watch on a headland for the ship which held something dear, though all her neighbours are certain that the ship was a wreck long years ago. After he had come out of the convent hospital, where the monks of San Miniato had taken care of him as long as he was helpless ; after he had watched in vain for the Wife who was to help him, and had begun to think that she was dead of the pestilence that seemed to fill all the space since the night he parted from her, he had been unable to conceive any way in which sacred vengeance could satisfy itself through his arm. His knife was gone, and he was too feeble in body to win another by work, too feeble in mind, even if he had had the knife, to contrive that it should serve its one purpose. He was a shattered, bewildered, lonely old man ; yet he desired to live : he waited for something of which he had no distinct vision—something dim, formless—that startled him, and made strong pulsations within him, like that unknown thing which we look for when we start from sleep, though no voice or touch has waked us. Baldassarre desired to live ; and therefore he crept out in the grey light, and seated himself in the long grass, and watched the waters that had a faint promise in them.

Meanwhile the Compagnacci were busy at their work. The formidable bands of armed men, left to do their will with very little interference from an embarrassed if not conniving Signoria, had parted into two masses, but both were soon making their way by different roads towards the Arno. The smaller mass was making for the Ponte

Rubaconte, the larger for the Ponte Vecchio; but in both the same words had passed from mouth to mouth as a signal, and almost every man of the multitude knew that he was going to the Via de' Bardi to sack a house there. If he knew no other reason, could he demand a better?

The armed Compagnacci knew something more, for a brief word of command flies quickly, and the leaders of the two streams of rabble had a perfect understanding that they would meet before a certain house a little towards the eastern end of the Via de' Bardi, where the master would probably be in bed, and be surprised in his morning sleep.

But the master of that house was neither sleeping nor in bed; he had not been in bed that night. For Tito's anxiety to quit Florence had been stimulated by the events of the previous day: investigations would follow in which appeals might be made to him delaying his departure: and in all delay he had an uneasy sense that there was danger. Falsehood had prospered and waxed strong; but it had nourished the twin life, Fear. He no longer wore his armour, he was no longer afraid of Baldassarre; but from the corpse of that dead fear a spirit had risen—the undying *habit* of fear. He felt he should not be safe till he was out of this fierce, turbid Florence; and now he was ready to go. Maso was to deliver up his house to the new tenant; his horses and mules were awaiting him in San Gallo; Tessa and the children had been lodged for the night in the Borgo outside the gate, and would be dressed in readiness to mount the mules and join him. He descended the stone steps into the court-yard, he passed through the great doorway, not the same

Tito, but nearly as brilliant as on the day when he had first entered that house and made the mistake of falling in love with Romola. The mistake was remedied now : the old life was cast off, and was soon to be far behind him.

He turned with rapid steps towards the Piazza dei Mozzi, intending to pass over the Ponte Rubaconte ; but as he went along certain sounds came upon his ears that made him turn round and walk yet more quickly in the opposite direction. Was the mob coming into Oltrarno ? It was a vexation, for he would have preferred the more private road. He must now go by the Ponte Vecchio ; and unpleasant sensations made him draw his mantle close round him, and walk at his utmost speed. There was no one to see him in that grey twilight. But, before he reached the end of the Via de' Bardi, like sounds fell on his ear again, and this time they were much louder and nearer. Could he have been deceived before ? The mob must be coming over the Ponte Vecchio. Again he turned, from an impulse of fear that was stronger than reflection ; but it was only to be assured that the mob was actually entering the street from the opposite end. He chose not to go back to his house : after all they would not attack *him*. Still, he had some valuables about him ; and all things except reason and order are possible with a mob. But necessity does the work of courage. He went on towards the Ponte Vecchio, the rush and the trampling and the confused voices getting so loud before him that he had ceased to hear them behind.

For he had reached the end of the street, and the crowd pouring from the bridge met him at the

turning and hemmed in his way. He had not time to wonder at a sudden shout before he felt himself surrounded, not, in the first instance, by an unarmed rabble, but by armed Compagnacci; the next sensation was that his cap fell off, and that he was thrust violently forward amongst the rabble, along the narrow passage of the bridge. Then he distinguished the shouts, 'Piagnone! Medicean! Piagnone! Throw him over the bridge!'

His mantle was being torn off him with strong pulls that would have throttled him if the fibula had not given way. Then his scarsella was snatched at; but all the while he was being hustled and dragged; and the snatch failed—his scarsella still hung at his side. Shouting, yelling, half motiveless execration rang stunningly in his ears, spreading even amongst those who had not yet seen him, and only knew there was a man to be reviled. Tito's horrible dread was that he should be struck down or trampled on before he reached the open arches that surmount the centre of the bridge. There was one hope for him, that they might throw him over before they had wounded him or beaten the strength out of him; and his whole soul was absorbed in that one hope and its obverse terror.

Yes—they *were* at the arches. In that moment Tito, with bloodless face and eyes dilated, had one of the self-preserving inspirations that come in extremity. With a sudden desperate effort he mastered the clasp of his belt, and flung belt and scarsella forward towards a yard of clear space against the parapet, crying in a ringing voice,—

'There are diamonds! there is gold!'

In the instant the hold on him was relaxed, and

there was a rush towards the scarsella. He threw himself on the parapet with a desperate leap, and the next moment plunged—plunged with a great splash into the dark river far below.

It was his chance of salvation; and it was a good chance. His life had been saved once before by his fine swimming, and as he rose to the surface again after his long dive he had a sense of deliverance. He struck out with all the energy of his strong prime, and the current helped him. If he could only swim beyond the Ponte alla Carrara he might land in a remote part of the city, and even yet reach San Gallo. Life was still before him. And the idiot mob, shouting and bellowing on the bridge there, would think he was drowned.

They did think so. Peering over the parapet along the dark stream, they could not see afar off the moving blackness of the floating hair, and the velvet tunic-sleeves.

It was only from the other way that a pale olive face could be seen looking white above the dark water: a face not easy even for the indifferent to forget, with its square forehead, the long low arch of the eyebrows, and the long lustrous agate-like eyes. Onward the face went on the dark current, with inflated quivering nostrils, with the blue veins distended on the temples. One bridge was passed—the bridge of Santa Trinitâ. Should he risk landing now rather than trust to his strength? No. He heard, or fancied he heard, yells and cries pursuing him. Terror pressed him most from the side of his fellow men: he was less afraid of indefinite chances, and he swam on, panting and straining. He was not so fresh as he

would have been if he had passed the night in sleep.

Yet the next bridge—the last bridge—was passed. He was conscious of it ; but in the tumult of his blood, he could only feel vaguely that he was safe and might land. But where ? The current was having its way with him : he hardly knew where he was : exhaustion was bringing on the dreamy state that precedes unconsciousness.

But now there were eyes that discerned him—aged eyes, strong for the distance. Baldassarre, looking up blankly from the search in the runlet that brought him nothing, had seen a white object coming along the broader stream. Could that be any fortunate chance for *him* ? He looked and looked till the object gathered form : then he leaned forward with a start as he sat among the rank green stems, and his eyes seemed to be filled with a new light. Yet he only watched—motionless. Something was being brought to him.

The next instant a man's body was cast violently on the grass two yards from him, and he started forward like a panther, clutching the velvet tunic as he fell forward on the body and flashed a look in the man's face.

Dead—was he dead ? The eyes were rigid. But no, it could not be—justice had brought him. Men looked dead sometimes, and yet the life came back into them. Baldassarre did not feel feeble in that moment. He knew just what he could do. He got his large fingers within the neck of the tunic and held them there, kneeling on one knee beside the body and watching the face. There was a fierce hope in his heart, but it was mixed with trembling. In his eyes there was only fierce-

ness : all the slow-burning remnant of life within him seemed to have leaped into flame.

Rigid—rigid still. Those eyes with the half-fallen lids were locked against vengeance. *Could* it be that he was dead ? There was nothing to measure the time : it seemed long enough for hope to freeze into despair.

Surely at last the eyelids were quivering : the eyes were no longer rigid. There was a vibrating light in them—they opened wide.

‘ Ah, yes ! You see me—you know me ! ’

Tito knew him ; but he did not know whether it was life or death that had brought him into the presence of his injured father. It might be death—and death might mean this chill gloom with the face of the hideous past hanging over him for ever.

But now Baldassarre’s only dread was, lest the young limbs should escape him. He pressed his knuckles against the round throat, and knelt upon the chest with all the force of his aged frame. Let death come now !

Again he kept his watch on the face. And when the eyes were rigid again, he dared not trust them. He would never loose his hold till some one came and found them. Justice would send some witness, and then he, Baldassarre, would declare that he had killed this traitor, to whom he had once been a father. They would perhaps believe him now, and then he would be content with the struggle of justice on earth—then he would desire to die with his hold on this body, and follow the traitor to hell that he might clutch him there.

And so he knelt, and so he pressed his knuckles against the round throat, without trusting to the

seeming death, till the light got strong, and he could kneel no longer. Then he sat on the body, still clutching the neck of the tunic. But the hours went on, and no witness came. No eyes descried afar off the two human bodies among the tall grass by the river-side. Florence was busy with greater affairs, and the preparation of a deeper tragedy.

Not long after those two bodies were lying in the grass, Savonarola was being tortured, and crying out in his agony, 'I will confess!'

It was not until the sun was westward that a wagon drawn by a mild grey ox came to the edge of the grassy margin, and as the man who led it was leaning to gather up the round stones that lay heaped in readiness to be carried away, he detected some startling object in the grass. The aged man had fallen forward, and his dead clutch was on the garment of the other. It was not possible to separate them: nay, it was better to put them into the wagon and carry them as they were into the great Piazza, that notice might be given to the Eight.

As the wagon entered the frequented streets there was a growing crowd escorting it with its strange burden. No one knew the bodies for a long while, for the aged face had fallen forward, half hiding the younger. But before they had been moved out of sight, they had been recognized.

'I know that old man,' Piero di Cosimo had testified. 'I painted his likeness once. He is the prisoner who clutched Melema on the steps of the Duomo.'

'He is perhaps the same old man who appeared at supper in my gardens,' said Bernardo Rucellai,

one of the Eight. ' I had forgotten him—I thought he had died in prison. But there is no knowing the truth now.'

Who shall put his finger on the work of justice, and say, ' It is there ' ? Justice is like the kingdom of God—it is not without us as a fact, it is within us as a great yearning.—*Romola*.

## JOHN RUSKIN

1819–1900

### AN ENGLISH CATHEDRAL AND ST. MARK'S

I WISH that the reader, before I bring him into St. Mark's Place, would imagine himself for a little time in a quiet English cathedral town, and walk with me to the west front of its cathedral. Let us go together up the more retired street, at the end of which we can see the pinnacles of one of the towers, and then through the low grey gateway, with its battlemented top and small latticed window in the centre, into the inner private-looking road or close, where nothing goes in but the carts of the tradesmen who supply the bishop and the chapter, and where there are little shaven grass-plots, fenced in by neat rails, before old-fashioned groups of somewhat diminutive and excessively trim houses, with little oriel and bay windows jutting out here and there, and deep wooden cornices and eaves painted cream colour and white, and small porches to their doors in the shape of cockle-shells, or little, crooked, thick, indescribable wooden gables warped a little on one side ; and so forward till we come to larger houses, also old-

fashioned, but of red brick, and with gardens behind them, and fruit walls, which show here and there, among the nectarines, the vestiges of an old cloister arch or shaft, and looking in front on the cathedral square itself, laid out in rigid divisions of smooth grass and gravel walk, yet not uncheerful, especially on the sunny side where the canons' children are walking with their nursery-maids. And so, taking care not to tread on the grass, we will go along the straight walk to the west front, and there stand for a time, looking up at its deep-pointed porches and the dark places between their pillars where there were statues once, and where the fragments, here and there, of a stately figure are still left, which has in it the likeness of a king, perhaps indeed a king on earth, perhaps a saintly king long ago in heaven ; and so higher and higher up to the great mouldering wall of rugged sculpture and confused arcades, shattered, and grey, and grisly with heads of dragons and mocking fiends, worn by the rain and swirling winds into yet unseemlier shape, and coloured on their stony scales by the deep russet-orange lichen, melancholy gold ; and so, higher still, to the bleak towers, so far above that the eye loses itself among the bosses of their traceries, though they are rude and strong, and only sees like a drift of eddying black points, now closing, now scattering, and now settling suddenly into invisible places among the bosses and flowers, the crowd of restless birds that fill the old square with that strange clangour of theirs, so harsh and yet so soothing, like the cries of birds on a solitary coast between the cliffs and the sea.

Think for a little while of that scene, and the meaning of all its small formalisms, mixed with its

serene sublimity. Estimate its secluded, continuous, drowsy felicities, and its evidence of the sense and steady performance of such kind of duties as can be regulated by the cathedral clock; and weigh the influence of those dark towers on all who have passed through the lonely square at their feet for centuries, and on all who have seen them rising far away over the wooded plain, or catching on their square masses the last rays of the sunset, when the city at their feet was indicated only by the mist at the bend of the river. And then let us quickly recollect that we are in Venice, and land at the extremity of the Calla Lunga San Moisè, which may be considered as there answering to the secluded street that led us to our English cathedral gateway.

We find ourselves in a paved alley, some seven feet wide where it is widest, full of people, and resonant with cries of itinerant salesman,—a shriek in their beginning, and dying away into a kind of brazen ringing, all the worse for its confinement between the high houses of the passage along which we have to make our way. Overhead an inextricable confusion of rugged shutters, and iron balconies and chimney flues pushed out on brackets to save room, and arched windows with projecting sills of Istrian stone, and gleams of green leaves here and there where a fig-tree branch escapes over a lower wall from some inner cortile, leading the eye up to the narrow stream of blue sky high over all. On each side, a row of shops, as densely set as may be, occupying, in fact, intervals between the square stone shafts, about eight feet high, which carry the first floors: intervals of which one is narrow and serves as a door; the other is, in the more respect-

able shops, wainscoted to the height of the counter and glazed above, but in those of the poorer tradesmen left open to the ground, and the wares laid on benches and tables in the open air, the light in all cases entering at the front only, and fading away in a few feet from the threshold into a gloom which the eye from without cannot penetrate, but which is generally broken by a ray or two from a feeble lamp at the back of the shop, suspended before a print of the Virgin. The less pious shopkeeper sometimes leaves his lamp unlighted, and is contented with a penny print; the more religious one has his print coloured and set in a little shrine with a gilded or figured fringe, with perhaps a faded flower or two on each side, and his lamp burning brilliantly. Here at the fruiterer's, where the dark-green water-melons are heaped upon the counter like cannon-balls, the Madonna has a tabernacle of fresh laurel leaves; but the pewterer next door has let his lamp out, and there is nothing to be seen in his shop but the dull gleam of the studded patterns on the copper pans, hanging from his roof in the darkness. Next comes a 'Vendita Frittole e Liquori,' where the Virgin, enthroned in a very humble manner beside a tallow candle on a back shelf, presides over certain ambrosial morsels of a nature too ambiguous to be defined or enumerated. But a few steps farther on, at the regular wine-shop of the calle, where we are offered 'Vino Nostrani a Soldi 28·32,' the Madonna is in great glory, enthroned above ten or a dozen large red casks of three-year-old vintage, and flanked by goodly ranks of bottles of Maraschino, and two crimson lamps; and for the evening, when the gondoliers will come to drink out, under her auspices,

the money they have gained during the day, she will have a whole chandelier.

A yard or two farther, we pass the hostelry of the Black Eagle, and, glancing as we pass through the square door of marble, deeply moulded, in the outer wall, we see the shadows of its pergola of vines resting on an ancient well, with a pointed shield carved on its side ; and so presently emerge on the bridge and Campo San Moisè, whence to the entrance into St. Mark's Place, called the Bocca di Piazza (mouth of the square), the Venetian character is nearly destroyed, first by the frightful façade of San Moisè, which we will pause at another time to examine, and then by the modernizing of the shops as they near the piazza, and the mingling with the lower Venetian populace of lounging groups of English and Austrians. We will push fast through them into the shadow of the pillars at the end of the 'Bocca di Piazza,' and then we forget them all ; for between those pillars there opens a great light, and, in the midst of it, as we advance slowly, the vast tower of St. Mark seems to lift itself visibly forth from the level field of chequered stones ; and, on each side, the countless arches prolong themselves into ranged symmetry, as if the rugged and irregular houses that pressed together above us in the dark alley had been struck back into sudden obedience and lovely order, and all their rude casements and broken walls had been transformed into arches charged with goodly sculpture, and fluted shafts of delicate stone.

And well may they fall back, for beyond those troops of ordered arches there rises a vision out of the earth, and all the great square seems to have opened from it in a kind of awe, that we may see it

far away ;—a multitude of pillars and white domes, clustered into a long low pyramid of coloured light ; a treasure-heap, it seems, partly of gold, and partly of opal and mother-of pearl, hollowed beneath into five great vaulted porches, ceiled with fair mosaic, and beset with sculpture of alabaster, clear as amber and delicate as ivory,—sculpture fantastic and involved, of palm leaves and lilies, and grapes and pomegranates, and birds clinging and fluttering among the branches, all twined together into an endless network of buds and plumes ; and, in the midst of it, the solemn forms of angels, sceptred, and robed to the feet, and leaning to each other across the gates, their figures indistinct among the gleaming of the golden ground through the leaves beside them, interrupted and dim, like the morning light as it faded back among the branches of Eden, when first its gates were angel-guarded long ago. And round the walls of the porches there are set pillars of variegated stones, jasper and porphyry, and deep-green serpentine spotted with flakes of snow, and marbles, that half refuse and half yield to the sunshine, Cleopatra-like, ‘their bluest veins to kiss’—the shadow, as it steals back from them, revealing line after line of azure undulation, as a receding tide leaves the waved sand ; their capitals rich with interwoven tracery, rooted knots of herbage, and drifting leaves of acanthus and vine, and mystical signs, all beginning and ending in the Cross ; and above them, in the broad archivolts, a continuous chain of language and of life—angels, and the signs of heaven, and the labours of men, each in its appointed season upon the earth ; and above these another range of glittering pinnacles, mixed with white arches edged with scarlet flowers,—a

confusion of delight, amidst which the breasts of the Greek horses are seen blazing in their breadth of golden strength, and the St. Mark's Lion, lifted on a blue field covered with stars, until at last, as if in ecstasy, the crests of the arches break into a marble foam, and toss themselves far into the blue sky in flashes and wreaths of sculptured spray, as if the breakers on the Lido shore had been frost-bound before they fell, and the sea-nymphs had inlaid them with coral and amethyst.

Between that grim cathedral of England and this, what an interval ! There is a type of it in the very birds that haunt them ; for, instead of the restless crowd, hoarse-voiced and sable-winged, drifting on the bleak upper air, the St. Mark's porches are full of doves, that nestle among the marble foliage, and mingle the soft iridescence of their living plumes, changing at every motion, with the tints, hardly less lovely, that have stood unchanged for seven hundred years.

And what effect has this splendour on those who pass beneath it ? You may walk from sunrise to sunset, to and fro, before the gateway of St. Mark's, and you will not see an eye lifted to it, nor a countenance brightened by it. Priest and layman, soldier and civilian, rich and poor, pass by it alike regardlessly. Up to the very recesses of the porches, the meanest tradesmen of the city push their counters ; nay, the foundations of its pillars are themselves the seats—not ' of them that sell doves ' for sacrifice, but of the vendors of toys and caricatures. Round the whole square in front of the church there is almost a continuous line of cafés, where the idle Venetians of the middle-classes lounge, and read empty journals ; in its centre the

Austrian bands play during the time of vespers, their martial music jarring with the organ notes,—the march drowning the miserere, and the sullen crowd thickening round them,—a crowd, which, if it had its will, would stiletto every soldier that pipes to it. And in the recesses of the porches, all day long, knots of men of the lowest classes, unemployed and listless, lie basking in the sun like lizards; and unregarded children,—every heavy glance of their young eyes full of desperation and stony depravity, and their throats hoarse with cursing,—gamble, and fight, and snarl, and sleep, hour after hour, clashing their bruised centesimi upon the marble ledges of the church porch. And the images of Christ and His angels look down upon it continually.—*The Stones of Venice.*

#### ON THE WOMEN OF SHAKESPEARE AND SCOTT

NOTE broadly in the outset, Shakespeare has no heroes;—he has only heroines. There is not one entirely heroic figure in all his plays, except the slight sketch of Henry the Fifth, exaggerated for the purposes of the stage; and the still slighter Valentine in *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*. In his laboured and perfect plays you have no hero. Othello would have been one, if his simplicity had not been so great as to leave him the prey of every base practice round him; but he is the only example even approximating to the heroic type. Coriolanus — Caesar — Antony, stand in flawed strength, and fall by their vanities;—Hamlet is indolent, and drowsily speculative; Romeo an impatient boy; the Merchant of Venice languidly submissive to adverse fortune; Kent, in *King Lear*, is entirely noble at heart, but too rough and

unpolished to be of true use at the critical time, and he sinks into the office of a servant only. Orlando, no less noble, is yet the despairing toy of chance, followed, comforted, saved by Rosalind. Whereas there is hardly a play that has not a perfect woman in it, steadfast in grave hope, and errorless purpose: Cordelia, Desdemona, Isabella, Hermione, Imogen, Queen Katherine, Perdita, Sylvia, Viola, Rosalind, Helena, and last, and perhaps loveliest, Virgilia, are all faultless; conceived in the highest heroic type of humanity.

Then observe, secondly,

The catastrophe of every play is caused always by the folly or fault of a man; the redemption, if there be any, is by the wisdom and virtue of a woman, and, failing that, there is none. The catastrophe of King Lear is owing to his own want of judgement, his impatient vanity, his misunderstanding of his children; the virtue of his one true daughter would have saved him from all the injuries of the others, unless he had cast her away from him; as it is, she all but saves him.

Of Othello I need not trace the tale;—nor the one weakness of his so mighty love; nor the inferiority of his perceptive intellect to that even of the second woman character in the play, the Emilia who dies in wild testimony against his error:

Oh, murderous coxcomb! What should such a fool  
Do with so good a wife?

In *Romeo and Juliet*, the wise and entirely brave stratagem of the wife is brought to ruinous issue by the reckless impatience of her husband. In *Winter's Tale*, and in *Cymbeline*, the happiness and existence of two princely households, lost through long years, and imperilled to the death

by the folly and obstinacy of the husbands, are redeemed at last by the queenly patience and wisdom of the wives. In *Measure for Measure*, the injustice of the judge, and the corrupt cowardice of the brother, are opposed to the victorious truth and adamantine purity of a woman. In *Coriolanus*, the mother's counsel, acted upon in time, would have saved her son from all evil; his momentary forgetfulness of it is his ruin; her prayer, at last granted, saves him—not, indeed, from death, but from the curse of living as the destroyer of his country.

And what shall I say of Julia, constant against the fickleness of a lover who is a mere wicked child?—of Helena, against the petulance and insult of a careless youth?—of the patience of Hero, the passion of Beatrice, and the calmly devoted wisdom of the 'unlessoned girl', who appears among the helplessness, the blindness, and the vindictive passions of men, as a gentle angel, to save merely by her presence, and defeat the worst intensities of crime by her smile?

Observe, further, among all the principal figures in Shakespeare's plays, there is only one weak woman—Ophelia; and it is because she fails Hamlet at the critical moment, and is not, and cannot in her nature be, a guide to him when he needs her most, that all the bitter catastrophe follows. Finally, though there are three wicked women among the principal figures, Lady Macbeth, Regan, and Goneril, they are felt at once to be frightful exceptions to the ordinary laws of life; fatal in their influence also in proportion to the power for good which they have abandoned.

Such, in broad light, is Shakespeare's testimony

to the position and character of women in human life. He represents them as infallibly faithful and wise counsellors,—incorruptibly just and pure examples—strong always to sanctify, even when they cannot save.

Not as in any wise comparable in knowledge of the nature of man,—still less in his understanding of the causes and courses of fate,—but only as the writer who has given us the broadest view of the conditions and modes of ordinary thought in modern society, I ask you next to receive the witness of Walter Scott.

I put aside his merely romantic prose writings as of no value : and though the early romantic poetry is very beautiful, its testimony is of no weight, other than that of a boy's ideal. But his true works, studied from Scottish life, bear a true witness; and in the whole range of these, there are but three men who reach the heroic type—Dandie Dinmont, Rob Roy, and Claverhouse ; of these, one is a border farmer ; another a freebooter ; the third a soldier in a bad cause. And these touch the ideal of heroism only in their courage and faith, together with a strong, but uncultivated, or mistakenly applied, intellectual power ; while his younger men are the gentlemanly playthings of fantastic fortune, and only by aid (or accident) of that fortune, survive, not vanquish, the trials they involuntarily sustain. Of any disciplined, or consistent character, earnest in a purpose wisely conceived, or dealing with forms of hostile evil, definitely challenged and resolutely subdued, there is no trace in his conceptions of men. Whereas in his imaginations of women,—in the characters of Ellen Douglas, of Flora MacIvor, Rose

Bradwardine, Catherine Seyton, Diana Vernon, Lillias Redgauntlet, Alice Bridgenorth, Alice Lee, and Jeanie Deans,—with endless varieties of grace, tenderness, and intellectual power, we find in all a quite infallible sense of dignity and justice; a fearless, instant, and untiring self-sacrifice to even the appearance of duty, much more to its real claims; and, finally, a patient wisdom of deeply-restrained affection, which does infinitely more than protect its objects from a momentary error; it gradually forms, animates, and exalts the characters of the unworthy lovers, until, at the close of the tale, we are just able, and no more, to take patience in hearing of their unmerited success.

So that in all cases, with Scott as with Shakespeare, it is the woman who watches over, teaches, and guides the youth; it is never, by any chance, the youth who watches over or educates his mistress.—*Sesame and Lilies*.

### ON WORK AND PLAY

FIRST, then, of the distinction between the classes who work and the classes who play. Of course we must agree upon a definition of these terms,—work and play—before going farther. Now, roughly, not with vain subtlety of definition, but for plain use of the words, ‘play’ is an exertion of body or mind, made to please ourselves, and with no determined end; and work is a thing done because it ought to be done, and with a determined end. You play, as you call it, at cricket, for instance. That is as hard work as anything else; but it amuses you, and it has no result but the amusement. If it were done as an ordered form of exercise, for health’s sake, it would become

work directly. So, in like manner, whatever we do to please ourselves, and only for the sake of the pleasure, not for an ultimate object, is 'play', the 'pleasing thing', not the useful thing. Play may be useful, in a secondary sense; (nothing is needed more useful or necessary;) but the use of it depends on its being spontaneous.

Let us, then, inquire together what sort of games the playing class in England spend their lives in playing at.

The first of all English games is making money. That is an all-absorbing game; and we knock each other down oftener in playing at that, than at football, or any other roughest sport: and it is absolutely without purpose; no one who engages heartily in that game ever knows why. Ask a great money-maker what he wants to do with his money,—he never knows. He doesn't make it to do anything with it. He gets it only that he *may* get it. 'What will you make of what you have got?' you ask. 'Well, I'll get more,' he says. Just as, at cricket, you get more runs. There's no use in the runs, but to get more of them than other people is the game. And there's no use in the money, but to have more of it than other people is the game. So all that great foul city of London there,—rattling, growling, smoking, stinking,—a ghastly heap of fermenting brickwork, pouring out poison at every pore,—you fancy it is a city of work? Not a street of it! It is a great city of play; very nasty play, and very hard play, but still play. It is only Lord's cricket-ground without the turf:—a huge billiard table without the cloth, and with pockets as deep as the bottomless pit; but mainly a billiard table, after all.

Well, the first great English game is this playing at counters. It differs from the rest in that it appears always to be producing money, while every other game is expensive. But it does not always produce money. There's a great difference between 'winning' money and 'making' it: a great difference between getting it out of another man's pocket into ours, or filling both. Collecting money is by no means the same as making it, the tax-gatherer's house is not the Mint; and much of the apparent gain (so called), in commerce, is only a form of taxation on carriage or exchange.

Our next great English game, however, hunting and shooting, is costly altogether; and how much we are fined for it annually in land, horses, game-keepers, and game laws, and all else that accompanies that beautiful and special English game, I will not endeavour to count now; but note only that, except for exercise, this is not merely a useless game, but a deadly one, to all connected with it. For through horse-racing, you get every form of what the higher classes everywhere call 'Play', in distinction from all other plays; that is,—gambling, by no means a beneficial or recreative game; and, through game-preserving, you get also some curious laying out of ground: that beautiful arrangement of dwelling-house for man and beast, by which we have grouse and blackcock—so many brace to the acre, and men and women—so many brace to the garret. I often wonder what the angelic builders and surveyors—the angelic builders who build the 'many mansions' up above there; and the angelic surveyors, who measured that four-square city with their measuring reeds—I wonder what they think, or are

supposed to think, of the laying out of ground by this nation, which has set itself, as it seems, literally to accomplish, word for word, or rather fact for word, in the persons of those poor whom its Master left to represent Him, what that Master said of Himself—that foxes and birds had homes, but He none.

Then, next to the gentlemen's game of hunting, we must put the ladies' game of dressing. It is not the cheapest of games. I saw a brooch at a jeweller's in Bond Street a fortnight ago, not an inch wide, and without any singular jewel in it, yet worth £3,000. And I wish I could tell you what this 'play' costs, altogether, in England, France, and Russia annually. But it is a pretty game, and on certain terms I like it; nay, I don't see it played quite as much as I would fain have it. You ladies like to lead the fashion:—by all means lead it—lead it thoroughly, lead it far enough. Dress yourselves nicely, and dress everybody else nicely. Lead the *fashions for the poor* first; make *them* look well, and you yourselves will look, in ways of which you have now no conception, all the better. The fashions you have set for some time among your peasantry are not pretty ones; their doublets are too irregularly slashed, and the wind blows too frankly through them.

Then there are other games, wild enough, as I could show you if I had time.

There's playing at literature, and playing at art—very different, both, from working at literature, or working at art, but I've no time to speak of these. I pass to the greatest of all—the play of plays, the great gentleman's game, which ladies like them best to play at,—the game of War. It

is entrancingly pleasant to the imagination ; the facts of it, not always so pleasant. We dress for it, however, more finely than for any other sport ; and go out to it, not merely in scarlet, as to hunt, but in scarlet and gold, and all manner of fine colours ; of course we could fight better in grey, and without feathers ; but all nations have agreed that it is good to be well dressed at this play. Then the bats and balls are very costly ; our English and French bats, with the balls and wickets, even those which we don't make any use of, costing, I suppose, now about fifteen millions of money annually to each nation ; all which you know is paid for by hard labourer's work in the furrow and furnace. A costly game !—not to speak of its consequences ; I will say at present nothing of these. The mere immediate cost of all these plays is what I want you to consider ; they all cost deadly work somewhere, as many of us know too well. The jewel-cutter, whose sight fails over the diamonds ; the weaver, whose arm fails over the web ; the iron-forging, whose breath fails before the furnace—*they* know what work is—they, who have all the work, and none of the play, except a kind they have named for themselves down in the black north country, where ' play ' means being laid up by sickness. It is a pretty example for philologists, of varying dialect, this change in the sense of the word ' play ' as used in the black country of Birmingham, and the red and black country of Baden-Baden. Yes, gentlemen, and gentlewomen, of England, who think ' one moment unamused a misery not made for feeble man,' this is what you have brought the word ' play ' to mean, in the heart of merry England ! You may have your fluting

and piping ; but there are sad children sitting in the market-place, who indeed cannot say to you, 'We have piped unto you, and ye have not danced : ' but eternally shall say to you, 'We have mourned unto you, and ye have not lamented.'

This, then, is the first distinction between the 'upper and lower' classes. And this is one which is by no means necessary ; which indeed must, in process of good time, be by all honest men's consent abolished. Men will be taught that an existence of play, sustained by the blood of other creatures, is a good existence for gnats and sucking fish ; but not for men : that neither days, nor lives, can be made holy by doing nothing in them : that the best prayer at the beginning of a day is that we may not lose its moments ; and the best grace before meat, the consciousness that we have justly earned our dinner. And when we have this much of plain Christianity preached to us again, and enough respect what we regard as inspiration, as not to think that 'Son, go work to-day in my vineyard,' means, 'Fool, go play to-day in my vineyard,' we shall all be workers, in one way or another ; and this much at least of the distinction between 'upper' and 'lower' forgotten.—*The Crown of Wild Olive.*

## JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL

1819-91

### DRYDEN AND POPE COMPARED

His practice is not always so delicate as his theory, but if he was sometimes rough, he never took a base advantage. He knocks his antagonist down, and there an end. Pope seems to have

nursed his grudge, and then, watching his chance, to have squirted vitriol from behind a corner, rather glad than otherwise if it fell on the women of those he hated or envied. And if Dryden is never dastardly, as Pope often was, so also he never wrote anything so maliciously depreciatory as Pope's unprovoked attack on Addison. Dryden's satire is often coarse, but where it is coarsest, it is commonly in defence of himself against attacks that were themselves brutal. Then, to be sure, he snatches the first ready cudgel, as in Shadwell's case, though even then there is something of the good-humour of conscious strength. Pope's provocation was too often the mere opportunity to say a biting thing, where he could do it safely. If his victim showed fight, he tried to smooth things over, as with Dennis. Dryden could forget that he had ever had a quarrel, but he never slunk away from any, least of all from one provoked by himself. Pope's satire is too much occupied with the externals of manners, habits, personal defects, and peculiarities. Dryden goes right to the rooted character of the man, to the weaknesses of his nature, as where he says of Burnet :

Prompt to assail, and careless of defence,  
Invulnerable in his impudence,  
He dares the world, and, eager of a name,  
He thrusts about and *justles into fame*.  
So fond of loud report that, not to miss  
Of being known (his last and utmost bliss),  
*He rather would be known for what he is.*

It would be hard to find in Pope such compression of meaning as in the first, or such penetrative sarcasm as in the second of the passages I have underscored. Dryden's satire is still quoted for

its comprehensiveness of application, Pope's rather for the elegance of its finish and the point of its phrase than for any deeper qualities. I do not remember that Dryden ever makes poverty a reproach. He was above it, alike by generosity of birth and mind. Pope is always the *parvenu*, always giving himself the airs of a fine gentleman, and, like Horace Walpole and Byron, affecting superiority to professional literature. Dryden, like Lessing, was a hack-writer, and was proud, as an honest man has a right to be, of being able to get his bread by his brains. He lived in Grub Street all his life, and never dreamed that where a man of genius lived was not the best quarter of the town. 'Tell his Majesty,' said sturdy old Jonson, 'that his soul lives in an alley.'—*Among my Books: Dryden.*

### BOOKS AND LIBRARIES

HAVE you ever rightly considered what the mere ability to read means? That it is the key which admits us to the whole world of thought and fancy and imagination? to the company of saint and sage, of the wisest and the wittiest at their wisest and wittiest moment? That it enables us to see with the keenest eyes, hear with the finest ears, and listen to the sweetest voices of all time? More than that, it annihilates time and space for us; it revives for us without a miracle the Age of Wonder, endowing us with the shoes of swiftness and the cap of darkness, so that we walk invisible like fern-seed, and witness unharmed the plague at Athens or Florence or London; accompany Caesar on his marches, or look in on Catiline in council with his fellow conspirators, or Guy Fawkes

in the cellar of St. Stephen's. We often hear of people who will descend to any servility, submit to any insult, for the sake of getting themselves or their children into what is euphemistically called good society. Did it ever occur to them that there is a select society of all the centuries to which they and theirs can be admitted for the asking, a society, too, which will not involve them in ruinous expense and still more ruinous waste of time and health and faculties ?

Southey tells us that, in his walk one stormy day, he met an old woman, to whom, by way of greeting, he made the rather obvious remark that it was dreadful weather. She answered, philosophically, that, in her opinion, '*any* weather was better than none !' I should be half inclined to say that any reading was better than none, allaying the crudeness of the statement by the Yankee proverb, which tells us that, though 'all deacons are good, there's odds in deacons'. Among books, certainly, there is much variety of company, ranging from the best to the worst, from Plato to Zola, and the first lesson in reading well is that which teaches us to distinguish between literature and merely printed matter. The choice lies wholly with ourselves. We have the key put into our hands ; shall we unlock the pantry or the oratory ? There is a Wallachian legend which, like most of the figments of popular fancy, has a moral in it. One Bakála, a good-for-nothing kind of fellow in his way, having had the luck to offer a sacrifice especially well pleasing to God, is taken up into heaven. He finds the Almighty sitting in something like the best room of a Wallachian peasant's cottage—there is always a profound pathos in the

homeliness of the popular imagination, forced, like the princess in the fairy tale, to weave its semblance of gold tissue out of straw. On being asked what reward he desires for the good service he has done, Bakála, who had always passionately longed to be the owner of a bagpipe, seeing a half worn-out one lying among some rubbish in a corner of the room, begs eagerly that it may be bestowed on him. The Lord, with a smile of pity at the meanness of his choice, grants him his boon, and Bakála goes back to earth delighted with his prize. With an infinite possibility within his reach, with the choice of wisdom, of power, of beauty, at his tongue's end, he asked according to his kind, and his sordid wish is answered with a gift as sordid. Yes, there is a choice in books as in friends, and the mind sinks or rises to the level of its habitual society, is subdued, as Shakespeare says of the dyer's hand, to what it works in. Cato's advice, *cum bonis ambula*, consort with the good, is quite as true if we extend it to books, for they, too, insensibly give away their own nature to the mind that converses with them. They either beckon upwards or drag down. *Du gleichst dem Geist den du begreifst*, says the World Spirit to Faust, and this is true of the ascending no less than of the descending scale. Every book we read may be made a round in the ever-lengthening ladder by which we climb to knowledge and to that temperance and serenity of mind which, as it is the ripest fruit of Wisdom, is also the sweetest. But this can only be if we read such books as make us think, and read them in such a way as helps us to do so, that is, by endeavouring to judge them, and thus to make them an exercise rather than

a relaxation of the mind. Desultory reading, except as conscious pastime, hebetates the brain and slackens the bow-string of Will. It communicates as little intelligence as the messages that run along the telegraph wire to the birds that perch on it. Few men learn the highest use of books. After lifelong study many a man discovers too late that to have had the philosopher's stone availed nothing without the philosopher to use it. Many a scholarly life, stretched like a talking wire to bring the wisdom of antiquity into communion with the present, can at last yield us no better news than the true accent of a Greek verse, or the translation of some filthy nothing scrawled on the walls of a brothel by some Pompeian idler. And it is certainly true that the material of thought reacts upon the thought itself. Shakespeare himself would have been commonplace had he been paddocked in a thinly shaven vocabulary, and Phidias, had he worked in wax, only a more inspired Mrs. Jarley. A man is known, says the proverb, by the company he keeps, and not only so, but made by it. Milton makes his fallen angels grow small to enter the infernal council room, but the soul, which God meant to be the spacious chamber where high thoughts and generous aspirations might commune together, shrinks and narrows itself to the measure of the meaner company that is wont to gather there, hatching conspiracies against our better selves. We are apt to wonder at the scholarship of the men of three centuries ago and at a certain dignity of phrase that characterizes them. They were scholars because they did not read so many things as we. They had fewer books, but these were of the best.

Their speech was noble, because they lunched with Plutarch and supped with Plato. We spend as much time over print as they did, but instead of communing with the choice thoughts of choice spirits, and unconsciously acquiring the grand manner of that supreme society, we diligently inform ourselves, and cover the continent with a cobweb of telegraphs to inform us, of such inspiring facts as that a horse belonging to Mr. Smith ran away on Wednesday, seriously damaging a valuable carry-all; that a son of Mr. Brown swallowed a hickory nut on Thursday; and that a gravel bank caved in and buried Mr. Robinson alive on Friday. Alas, it is we ourselves that are getting buried alive under this avalanche of earthy impertinences! It is we who, while we might each in his humble way be helping our fellows into the right path, or adding one block to the climbing spire of a fine soul, are willing to become mere sponges saturated from the stagnant goosepond of village gossip. This is the kind of news we compass the globe to catch, fresh from Bungtown Centre, when we might have it fresh from heaven by the electric lines of poet or prophet! It is bad enough that we should be compelled to know so many nothings, but it is downright intolerable that we must wash so many barrow-loads of gravel to find a grain of mica after all. And then to be told that the ability to read makes us all shareholders in the Bonanza Mine of Universal Intelligence!

One is sometimes asked by young people to recommend a course of reading. My advice would be that they should confine themselves to the supreme books in whatever literature, or still

better to choose some one great author, and make themselves thoroughly familiar with him. For, as all roads lead to Rome, so do they likewise lead away from it, and you will find that, in order to understand perfectly and weigh exactly any vital piece of literature you will be gradually and pleasantly persuaded to excursions and explorations of which you little dreamed when you began, and will find yourselves scholars before you are aware. For remember that there is nothing less profitable than scholarship for the mere sake of scholarship, nor anything more wearisome in the attainment. But the moment you have a definite aim, attention is quickened, the mother of memory, and all that you acquire groups and arranges itself in an order that is lucid, because everywhere and always it is in intelligent relation to a central object of constant and growing interest. This method also forces upon us the necessity of thinking, which is, after all, the highest result of all education. For what we want is not learning but knowledge ; that is, the power to make learning answer its true end as a quickener of intelligence and a widener of our intellectual sympathies. I do not mean to say that every one is fitted by nature or inclination for a definite course of study, or indeed for serious study in any sense. I am quite willing that these should ' browse in a library ', as Dr. Johnson called it, to their hearts' content. It is, perhaps, the only way in which time may be profitably wasted. But desultory reading will not make a ' full man ', as Bacon understood it, of one who has not Johnson's memory, his power of assimilation, and, above all, his comprehensive view of the relations of things. ' Read not ', says Lord Bacon, in his

essay *Of Studies*, 'to contradict and confute ; nor to believe and take for granted ; nor to find talk and discourse ; but to weigh and consider. Some books are to be tasted, others to be swallowed, and some few to be chewed and digested ; that is, some books are to be read only in parts ; others to be read, but not curiously [carefully], and some few to be read wholly and with diligence and attention. *Some books also may be read by deputy.*' This is weighty and well said, and I would call your attention especially to the wise words with which the passage closes. The best books are not always those which lend themselves to discussion and comment, but those (like Montaigne's *Essays*) which discuss and comment ourselves.

I have been speaking of such books as should be chosen for profitable reading. A public library, of course, must be far wider in its scope. It should contain something for all tastes, as well as the material necessary for a thorough grounding in all branches of knowledge. It should be rich in books of reference, in encyclopaedias, where one may learn without cost of research what things are generally known. For it is far more useful to know these than to know those that are *not* generally known. Not to know them is the defect of those half-trained and therefore hasty men who find a mare's nest on every branch of the tree of knowledge. A library should contain ample stores of history, which, if it do not always deserve the pompous title which Bolingbroke gave it, of philosophy teaching by example, certainly teaches many things profitable for us to know and lay to heart ; teaches, among other things, how much of the present is still held in mortmain by the past ;

teaches that, if there be no controlling purpose, there is, at least, a sternly logical sequence in human affairs, and that chance has but a trifling dominion over them, teaches why things are and must be so and not otherwise, and that, of all hopeless contests, the most hopeless is that which fools are most eager to challenge—with the Nature of Things; teaches, perhaps, more than anything else, the value of personal character as a chief factor in what used to be called destiny, for that cause is strong which has not a multitude, but one strong man behind it. History is, indeed, mainly the biography of a few imperial men, and forces home upon us the useful lesson how infinitesimally important our own private affairs are to the universe in general. History is clarified experience, and yet how little do men profit by it; nay, how should we expect it of those who so seldom are taught anything by their own! Delusions, especially economical delusions, seem the only things that have any chance of an earthly immortality. I would have plenty of biography. It is no insignificant fact that eminent men have always loved their Plutarch, since example, whether for emulation or avoidance, is never so poignant as when presented to us in a striking personality. Autobiographies are also instructive reading to the student of human nature, though generally written by men who are more interesting to themselves than to their fellow men. I have been told that Emerson and George Eliot agreed in thinking Rousseau's *Confessions* the most interesting book they had ever read.

A public library should also have many and full shelves of political economy, for the dismal science,

as Carlyle called it, if it prove nothing else will go far towards proving that theory is the bird in the bush, though she sing more sweetly than the nightingale, and that the millennium will not hasten its coming in deference to the most convincing string of resolutions that were ever unanimously adopted in public meeting. It likewise induces in us a profound and wholesome distrust of social panaceas.

I would have a public library abundant in translations of the best books in all languages, for, though no work of genius can be adequately translated, because every word of it is permeated with what Milton calls 'the precious life-blood of a master spirit' which cannot be transfused into the veins of the best translation, yet some acquaintance with foreign and ancient literatures has the liberalizing effect of foreign travel. He who travels by translation travels more hastily and superficially, but brings home something that is worth having, nevertheless. Translations properly used, by shortening the labour of acquisition, add as many years to our lives as they subtract from the processes of education. Looked at from any but the aesthetic point of view, translations retain whatever property was in their originals to enlarge, liberalize, and refine the mind. At the same time I would have also the originals of these translated books as a temptation to the study of languages, which has a special use and importance of its own in teaching us to understand the niceties of our mother tongue. The practice of translation, by making us deliberate in the choice of the best equivalent of the foreign word in our own language has likewise the advantage of continually schooling

us in one of the main elements of a good style—precision; and precision of thought is not only exemplified by precision of language, but is largely dependent on the habit of it.

In such a library the sciences should be fully represented, that men may at least learn to know in what a marvellous museum they live, what a wonder-worker is giving them an exhibition daily for nothing. Nor let Art be forgotten in all its many forms, not as the antithesis of Science, but as her elder or fairer sister, whom we love all the more that her usefulness cannot be demonstrated in dollars and cents. I should be thankful if every day-labourer among us could have his mind illumined, as those of Athens and of Florence had, with some image of what is best in architecture, painting, and sculpture, to train his crude perceptions and perhaps call out latent faculties. I should like to see the works of Ruskin within the reach of every artisan among us. For I hope some day that the delicacy of touch and accuracy of eye that have made our mechanics in some departments the best in the world, may give us the same supremacy in works of wider range and more purely ideal scope.

Voyages and travels I would also have, good store, especially the earlier, when the world was fresh and unhackneyed and men saw things invisible to the modern eye. They are fast sailing ships to waft away from present trouble to the Fortunate Isles.

To wash down the drier morsels that every library must necessarily offer at its board, let there be plenty of imaginative literature, and let its range be not too narrow to stretch from Dante

to the elder Dumas. The world of the imagination is not the world of abstraction and nonentity, as some conceive, but a world formed out of chaos by a sense of the beauty that is in man and the earth on which he dwells. It is the realm of Might-be, our haven of refuge from the shortcomings and disillusionings of life. It is, to quote Spenser, who knew it well—

The world's sweet inn from care and wearisome turmoil. Do we believe, then, that God gave us in mockery this splendid faculty of sympathy with things that are a joy for ever? For my part, I believe that the love and study of works of imagination is of practical utility in a country so profoundly material (or, as we like to call it, practical) in its leading tendencies as ours. The hunger after purely intellectual delights, the content with ideal possessions, cannot but be good for us in maintaining a wholesome balance of the character and of the faculties. I for one shall never be persuaded that Shakespeare left a less useful legacy to his countrymen than Watt. We hold all the deepest, all the highest satisfactions of life as tenants of imagination. Nature will keep up the supply of what are called hard-headed people without our help, and if it come to that, there are other as good uses for heads as at the end of battering rams.

I know that there are many excellent people who object to the reading of novels as a waste of time, if not as otherwise harmful. But I think they are trying to outwit nature, who is sure to prove cunninger than they. Look at children. One boy shall want a chest of tools, and one a book, and of those who want books one shall ask for

a botany, another for a romance. They will be sure to get what they want, and we are doing a grave wrong to their morals by driving them to do things on the sly, to steal that food which their constitution craves and which is wholesome for them, instead of having it freely and frankly given them as the wisest possible diet. If we cannot make a silk purse out of a sow's ear, so neither can we hope to succeed with the opposite experiment. But we may spoil the silk for its legitimate uses. I can conceive of no healthier reading for a boy, or a girl either, than Scott's novels, or Cooper's, to speak only of the dead. I have found them very good reading at least for one young man, for one middle-aged man, and for one who is growing old. No, no—banish the Antiquary, banish Leather Stocking, and banish all the world! Let us not go about to make life duller than it is.—*Literary and Political Addresses.*

## MATTHEW ARNOLD

1822-88

### MARCUS AURELIUS

THE man whose thoughts Mr. Long has thus faithfully reproduced, is perhaps the most beautiful figure in history. He is one of those consoling and hope-inspiring marks, which stand for ever to remind our weak and easily discouraged race how high human goodness and perseverance have once been carried, and may be carried again. The interest of mankind is peculiarly attracted by examples of signal goodness in high places; for

that testimony to the worth of goodness is the most striking which is borne by those to whom all the means of pleasure and self-indulgence lay open, by those who had at their command the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them. Marcus Aurelius was the ruler of the grandest of empires; and he was one of the best of men. Besides him, history presents one or two other sovereigns eminent for their goodness, such as Saint Louis or Alfred. But Marcus Aurelius has, for us moderns, this great superiority in interest over Saint Louis or Alfred, that he lived and acted in a state of society modern by its essential characteristics, in an epoch akin to our own, in a brilliant centre of civilization. Trajan talks of 'our enlightened age' just as glibly as *The Times* talks of it. Marcus Aurelius thus becomes for us a man like ourselves, a man in all things tempted as we are. Saint Louis inhabits an atmosphere of mediaeval Catholicism, which the man of the nineteenth century may admire, indeed, may even passionately wish to inhabit, but which, strive as he will, he cannot really inhabit; Alfred belongs to a state of society (I say it with all deference to the *Saturday Review* critic who keeps such jealous watch over the honour of our Saxon ancestors) half barbarous. Neither Alfred nor Saint Louis can be morally and intellectually as near to us as Marcus Aurelius.

The record of the outward life of this admirable man has in it little of striking incident. He was born at Rome on the 26th of April, in the year 121 of the Christian era. He was nephew and son-in-law to his predecessor on the throne, Antoninus Pius. When Antoninus died, he was forty years old, but from the time of his earliest manhood he

had assisted in administering public affairs. Then, after his uncle's death in 161, for nineteen years he reigned as emperor. The barbarians were pressing on the Roman frontier, and a great part of Marcus Aurelius's nineteen years of reign was passed in campaigning. His absences from Rome were numerous and long : we hear of him in Asia Minor, Syria, Egypt, Greece ; but, above all, in the countries on the Danube, where the war with the barbarians was going on,—in Austria, Moravia, Hungary. In these countries much of his *Journal* seems to have been written ; parts of it are dated from them ; and there, a few weeks before his fifty-ninth birthday, he fell sick and died.<sup>1</sup> The record of him on which his fame chiefly rests is the record of his inward life,—his *Journal*, or *Commentaries*, or *Meditations*, or *Thoughts*, for by all these names has the work been called. Perhaps the most interesting of the records of his outward life is that which the first book of this work supplies, where he gives an account of his education, recites the names of those to whom he is indebted for it, and enumerates his obligations to each of them. It is a refreshing and consoling picture, a priceless treasure for those, who, sick of the 'wild and dreamlike trade of blood and guile', which seems to be nearly the whole of what history has to offer to our view, seek eagerly for that substratum of right thinking and well-doing which in all ages must surely have somewhere existed, for without it the continued life of humanity would have been impossible. 'From my mother I learnt piety and beneficence, and abstinence not only from evil deeds but even from evil thoughts ; and further,

<sup>1</sup> He died on the 17th of March A. D. 180.

simplicity in my way of living, far removed from the habits of the rich.' Let us remember that, the next time we are reading the sixth satire of Juvenal. 'From my tutor I learnt' (hear it, ye tutors of princes!) 'endurance of labour, and to want little, and to work with my own hands, and not to meddle with other people's affairs, and not to be ready to listen to slander.' The vices and foibles of the Greek sophist or rhetorician—the *Graeculus esuriens*—are in everybody's mind; but he who reads Marcus Aurelius's account of his Greek teachers and masters, will understand how it is that, in spite of the vices and foibles of individual *Graeculi*, the education of the human race owes to Greece a debt which can never be overrated. The vague and colourless praise of history leaves on the mind hardly any impression of Antoninus Pius: it is only from the private memoranda of his nephew that we learn what a disciplined, hard-working, gentle, wise, virtuous man he was; a man who, perhaps, interests mankind less than his immortal nephew only because he has left in writing no record of his inner life,—*caret quia vate sacro*.

Of the outward life and circumstances of Marcus Aurelius, beyond these notices which he has himself supplied, there are few of much interest and importance. There is the fine anecdote of his speech when he heard of the assassination of the revolted Avidius Cassius, against whom he was marching; *he was sorry, he said, to be deprived of the pleasure of pardoning him*. And there are one or two more anecdotes of him which show the same spirit. But the great record of the outward life of a man who has left such a record of his lofty inward aspirations as that which Marcus Aurelius

has left, is the clear consenting voice of all his contemporaries,—high and low, friend and enemy, pagan and Christian,—in praise of his sincerity, justice, and goodness. The world's charity does not err on the side of excess, and here was a man occupying the most conspicuous station in the world, and professing the highest possible standard of conduct ;—yet the world was obliged to declare that he walked worthily of his profession. Long after his death, his bust was to be seen in the houses of private men through the wide Roman empire : it may be the vulgar part of human nature which busies itself with the semblance and doings of living sovereigns, it is its nobler part which busies itself with those of the dead ; these busts of Marcus Aurelius, in the homes of Gaul, Britain, and Italy, bore witness, not to the inmates' frivolous curiosity about princes and palaces, but to their reverential memory of the passage of a great man upon the earth. . . .

Yet, when one passes from his outward to his inward life, when one turns over the pages of his *Meditations*,—entries jotted down from day to day, amid the business of the city or the fatigues of the camp, for his own guidance and support, meant for no eye but his own, without the slightest attempt at style, with no care, even, for correct writing, not to be surpassed for naturalness and sincerity,—all disposition to carp and cavil dies away, and one is overpowered by the charm of a character of such purity, delicacy, and virtue. He fails neither in small things nor in great ; he keeps watch over himself both that the great springs of action may be right in him, and that the minute details of action may be right also. How admirable in

a hard-tasked ruler, and a ruler, too, with a passion for thinking and reading, is such a memorandum as the following :

‘ Not frequently nor without necessity to say to any one, or to write in a letter, that I have no leisure ; nor continually to excuse the neglect of duties required by our relation to those with whom we live, by alleging urgent occupation.’

And, when that ruler is a Roman emperor, what an ‘ idea ’ is this to be written down and meditated by him :

‘ The idea of a polity in which there is the same law for all, a polity administered with regard to equal rights and equal freedom of speech, and the idea of a kingly government which respects most of all the freedom of the governed.’

And, for all men who ‘ drive at practice ’, what practical rules may not one accumulate out of these *Meditations* :

‘ The greatest part of what we say or do being unnecessary, if a man takes this away, he will have more leisure and less uneasiness. Accordingly, on every occasion a man should ask himself : “ Is this one of the unnecessary things ? ” Now a man should take away not only unnecessary acts, but also unnecessary thoughts, for thus superfluous acts will not follow after.’

And again :

‘ We ought to check in the series of our thoughts everything that is without a purpose and useless, but most of all the over-curious feeling and the malignant ; and a man should use himself to think of those things only about which if one should suddenly ask, “ What hast thou now in thy thoughts ? ” with perfect openness thou mightest

immediately answer, "This or That;" so that from thy words it should be plain that everything in thee is simple and benevolent, and such as befits a social animal, and one that cares not for thoughts about sensual enjoyments, or any rivalry or envy and suspicion, or anything else for which thou wouldst blush if thou shouldst say thou hadst it in thy mind.'

So, with a stringent practicalness worthy of Franklin, he discourses on his favourite text, *Let nothing be done without a purpose*. But it is when he enters the region where Franklin cannot follow him, when he utters his thoughts on the ground-motives of human action, that he is most interesting;—that he becomes the unique, the incomparable Marcus Aurelius. Christianity uses language very liable to be misunderstood when it seems to tell men to do good, not, certainly, from the vulgar motives of worldly interest, or vanity, or love of human praise, but that 'their Father which seeth in secret may reward them openly'. The motives of reward and punishment have come, from the misconception of language of this kind, to be strangely overpressed by many Christian moralists, to the deterioration and disfigurement of Christianity. Marcus Aurelius says, truly and nobly :

'One man, when he has done a service to another, is ready to set it down to his account as a favour conferred. Another is not ready to do this, but still in his own mind he thinks of the man as his debtor, and he knows what he has done. A third in a manner does not even know what he has done, *but he is like a vine which has produced grapes, and seeks for nothing more after it has once produced its*

*proper fruit.* As a horse when he has run, a dog when he has caught the game, a bee when it has made its honey, so a man when he has done a good act, does not call out for others to come and see, but he goes on to another act, as a vine goes on to produce again the grapes in season. Must a man, then, be one of these, who in a manner acts thus without observing it? Yes.'

And again :

'What more dost thou want when thou hast done a man a service? Art thou not content that thou hast done something conformable to thy nature, and dost thou seek to be paid for it, *just as if the eye demanded a recompense for seeing, or the feet for walking?*'

Christianity, in order to match morality of this strain, has to correct its apparent offers of external reward, and to say : *The kingdom of God is within you.*

I have said that it is by its accent of emotion that the morality of Marcus Aurelius acquires a special character, and reminds one of Christian morality. The sentences of Seneca are stimulating to the intellect; the sentences of Epictetus are fortifying to the character; the sentences of Marcus Aurelius find their way to the soul. I have said that religious emotion has the power to *light up* morality : the emotion of Marcus Aurelius does not quite light up his morality, but it suffuses it; it has not power to melt the clouds of effort and austerity quite away, but it shines through them and glorifies them; it is a spirit, not so much of gladness and elation, as of gentleness and sweetness; a delicate and tender sentiment, which is less than joy and more than resignation. He says

that in his youth he learned from Maximus, one of his teachers, 'cheerfulness in all circumstances as well as in illness ; *and a just admixture in the moral character of sweetness and dignity :*' and it is this very admixture of sweetness with his dignity which makes him so beautiful a moralist. It enables him to carry even into his observation of nature a delicate penetration, a sympathetic tenderness, worthy of Wordsworth ; the spirit of such a remark as the following has hardly a parallel, so far as my knowledge goes, in the whole range of Greek and Roman literature :

'Figs, when they are quite ripe, gape open ; and in the ripe olives the very circumstance of their being near to rottenness adds a peculiar beauty to the fruit. And the ears of corn bending down, and the lion's eyebrows, and the foam which flows from the mouth of wild boars, and many other things,—though they are far from being beautiful, in a certain sense,—still, because they come in the course of nature, have a beauty in them, and they please the mind ; so that if a man should have a feeling and a deeper insight with respect to the things which are produced in the universe, there is hardly anything which comes in the course of nature which will not seem to him to be in a manner disposed so as to give pleasure.'

But it is when his strain passes to directly moral subjects that his delicacy and sweetness lend to it the greatest charm. Let those who can feel the beauty of spiritual refinement read this, the reflection of an emperor who prized mental superiority highly :

'Thou sayest, "Men cannot admire the sharpness of thy wits." Be it so ; but there are many

other things of which thou canst not say, "I am not formed for them by nature." Show those qualities, then, which are altogether in thy power—sincerity, gravity, endurance of labour, aversion to pleasure, contentment with thy portion and with few things, benevolence, frankness, no love of superfluity, freedom from trifling, magnanimity. Dost thou not see how many qualities thou art at once able to exhibit, as to which there is no excuse of natural incapacity and unfitness, and yet thou still remainest voluntarily below the mark? Or art thou compelled, through being defectively furnished by nature, to murmur, and to be mean, and to flatter, and to find fault with thy poor body, and to try to please men, and to make great display, and to be so restless in thy mind? No, indeed; but thou mightest have been delivered from these things long ago. Only, if in truth thou canst be charged with being rather slow and dull of comprehension, thou must exert thyself about this also, not neglecting nor yet taking pleasure in thy dullness.'

The same sweetness enables him to fix his mind, when he sees the isolation and moral death caused by sin, not on the cheerless thought of the misery of this condition, but on the inspiring thought that man is blest with the power to escape from it:

'Suppose that thou hast detached thyself from the natural unity,—for thou wast made by nature a part, but now thou hast cut thyself off,—yet here is this beautiful provision, that it is in thy power again to unite thyself. God has allowed this to no other part,—after it has been separated and cut asunder, to come together again. But consider the goodness with which he has privileged man; for he has put

it in his power, when he has been separated, to return and to be united and to resume his place.'

It enables him to control even the passion for retreat and solitude, so strong in a soul like his, to which the world could offer no abiding city :

'Men seek retreat for themselves, houses in the country, sea-shores, and mountains ; and thou, too, art wont to desire such things very much. But this is altogether a mark of the most common sort of men, for it is in thy power whenever thou shalt choose to retire into thyself. For nowhere either with more quiet or more freedom from trouble does a man retire than into his own soul, particularly when he has within him such thoughts that by looking into them he is immediately in perfect tranquillity. Constantly, then, give to thyself this retreat, and renew thyself ; and let thy principles be brief and fundamental, which, as soon as thou shalt recur to them, will be sufficient to cleanse the soul completely, and to send thee back free from all discontent with the things to which thou returnest.'

Against this feeling of discontent and weariness, so natural to the great for whom there seems nothing left to desire or to strive after, but so enfeebling to them, so deteriorating, Marcus Aurelius never ceased to struggle. With resolute thankfulness he kept in remembrance the blessings of his lot ; the true blessings of it, not the false :

'I have to thank Heaven that I was subjected to a ruler and a father (Antoninus Pius) who was able to take away all pride from me, and to bring me to the knowledge that it is possible for a man to live

in a palace without either guards, or embroidered dresses, or any show of this kind ; but that it is in such a man's power to bring himself very near to the fashion of a private person, without being for this reason either meaner in thought or more remiss in action with respect to the things which must be done for public interest. . . . I have to be thankful that my children have not been stupid nor deformed in body ; that I did not make more proficiency in rhetoric, poetry, and the other studies, by which I should perhaps have been completely engrossed, if I had seen that I was making great progress in them ; . . . that I knew Apollonius, Rusticus, Maximus ; . . . that I received clear and frequent impressions about living according to nature, and what kind of a life that is, so that, so far as depended on Heaven, and its gifts, help, and inspiration, nothing hindered me from forthwith living according to nature, though I still fall short of it through my own fault, and through not observing the admonitions of Heaven, and, I may almost say, its direct instructions ; that my body has held out so long in such a kind of life as mine ; that though it was my mother's lot to die young, she spent the last years of her life with me ; that whenever I wished to help any man in his need, I was never told that I had not the means of doing it ; that, when I had an inclination to philosophy, I did not fall into the hands of a sophist.'

And, as he dwelt with gratitude on these helps and blessings vouchsafed to him, his mind (so, at least, it seems to me) would sometimes revert with awe to the perils and temptations of the lonely height where he stood, to the lives of Tiberius, Caligula, Nero, Domitian, in their hideous blackness

and ruin ; and then he wrote down for himself such a warning entry as this, significant and terrible in its abruptness :

‘ A black character, a womanish character, a stubborn character, bestial, childish, animal, stupid, counterfeit, scurrilous, fraudulent, tyrannical !

Or this :

‘ About what am I now employing my soul ? On every occasion I must ask myself this question, and inquire, What have I now in this part of me which they call the ruling principle, and whose soul have I now ?—that of a child, or of a young man, or of a weak woman, or of a tyrant, or of one of the lower animals in the service of man, or of a wild beast ? ’

The character he wished to attain he knew well, and beautifully he has marked it, and marked, too, his sense of shortcoming :

‘ When thou hast assumed these names,—good, modest, true, rational, equal-minded, magnanimous,—take care that thou dost not change these names ; and, if thou shouldst lose them, quickly return to them. If thou maintainest thyself in possession of these names without desiring that others should call thee by them, thou wilt be another being, and wilt enter on another life. For to continue to be such as thou hast hitherto been, and to be torn in pieces and defiled in such a life, is the character of a very stupid man, and one overfond of his life, and like those half-devoured fighters with wild beasts, who though covered with wounds and gore still entreat to be kept to the following day, though they will be exposed in the same state to the same claws and bites. Therefore fix thyself in the possession of these few names : and if thou

art able to abide in them, abide as if thou wast removed to the Happy Islands.'

For all his sweetness and serenity, however, man's point of life 'between two infinities' (of that expression Marcus Aurelius is the real owner) was to him anything but a Happy Island, and the performances on it he saw through no veils of illusion. Nothing is in general more gloomy and monotonous than declamations on the hollowness and transitoriness of human life and grandeur: but here, too, the great charm of Marcus Aurelius, his emotion, comes in to relieve the monotony and to break through the gloom; and even on this eternally-used topic he is imaginative, fresh, and striking:

'Consider, for example, the times of Vespasian. Thou wilt see all these things, people marrying, bringing up children, sick, dying, warring, feasting, trafficking, cultivating the ground, flattering, obstinately arrogant, suspecting, plotting, wishing for somebody to die, grumbling about the present, loving, heaping up treasure, desiring to be consuls or kings. Well then, that life of these people no longer exists at all. Again, go to the times of Trajan. All is again the same. Their life too is gone. But chiefly thou shouldst think of those whom thou hast thyself known distracting themselves about idle things, neglecting to do what was in accordance with their proper constitution, and to hold firmly to this and to be content with it.'

Again:

'The things which are much valued in life are empty, and rotten, and trifling; and people are like little dogs biting one another, and little children quarrelling, crying, and then straightway

laughing. But fidelity, and modesty, and justice, and truth, are fled

Up to Olympus from the widespread earth.

What then is there which still detains thee here ?

And once more :

‘ Look down from above on the countless herds of men, and their countless solemnities, and the infinitely varied voyagings in storms and calms, and the differences among those who are born, who live together, and die. And consider too the life lived by others in olden time, and the life now lived among barbarous nations, and how many know not even thy name, and how many will soon forget it, and how they who perhaps now are praising thee will very soon blame thee, and that neither a posthumous name is of any value, nor reputation, nor anything else.’

He recognized, indeed, that (to use his own words) ‘ the prime principle in man’s constitution is the social ; ’ and he laboured sincerely to make not only his acts towards his fellow men, but his thoughts also, suitable to this conviction :

‘ When thou wishest to delight thyself, think of the virtues of those who live with thee ; for instance, the activity of one, and the modesty of another, and the liberality of a third, and some other good quality of a fourth.’

Still, it is hard for a pure and thoughtful man to live in a state of rapture at the spectacle afforded to him by his fellow creatures ; above all it is hard, when such a man is placed as Marcus Aurelius was placed, and has had the meanness and perversity of his fellow creatures thrust, in no common measure, upon his notice,—has had, time after

time, to experience how ' within ten days thou wilt seem a god to those to whom thou art now a beast and an ape '. His true strain of thought as to his relations with his fellow men is rather the following. He has been enumerating the higher consolations which may support a man at the approach of death, and he goes on :

' But if thou requirest also a vulgar kind of comfort which shall reach thy heart, thou wilt be made best reconciled to death by observing the objects from which thou art going to be removed, and the morals of those with whom thy soul will no longer be mingled. For it is no way right to be offended with men, but it is thy duty to care for them and to bear with them gently ; and yet to remember that thy departure will not be from men who have the same principles as thyself. For this is the only thing, if there be any, which could draw us the contrary way and attach us to life, to be permitted to live with those who have the same principles as ourselves. But now thou seest how great is the distress caused by the difference of those who live together, so that thou mayest say : " Come quick, O death, lest perchance I too should forget myself." '

*O faithless and perverse generation ! how long shall I be with you ? how long shall I suffer you ?* Sometimes this strain rises even to passion :

' Short is the little which remains to thee of life. Live as on a mountain. Let men see, let them know, a real man, who lives as he was meant to live. If they cannot endure him, let them kill him. For that is better than to live as men do.'

It is remarkable how little of a merely local and temporary character, how little of those *scoriae* which a reader has to clear away before he gets to

the precious ore, how little that even admits of doubt or question, the morality of Marcus Aurelius exhibits. Perhaps as to one point we must make an exception. Marcus Aurelius is fond of urging as a motive for man's cheerful acquiescence in whatever befalls him, that '*whatever happens to every man is for the interest of the universal*;' that the whole contains nothing *which is not for its advantage*; that everything which happens to a man is to be accepted, '*even if it seems disagreeable, because it leads to the health of the universe.*' And the whole course of the universe, he adds, has a providential reference to man's welfare: '*all other things have been made for the sake of rational beings.*' Religion has in all ages freely used this language, and it is not religion which will object to Marcus Aurelius's use of it; but science can hardly accept as severely accurate this employment of the terms *interest* and *advantage*. Even to a sound nature and a clear reason the proposition that things happen '*for the interest of the universal*', as men conceive of interest, may seem to have no meaning at all, and the proposition that '*all things have been made for the sake of rational beings*' may seem to be false. Yet even to this language, not irresistibly cogent when it is thus absolutely used, Marcus Aurelius gives a turn which makes it true and useful, when he says: '*The ruling part of man can make a material for itself out of that which opposes it, as fire lays hold of what falls into it, and rises higher by means of this very material*;'—when he says: '*What else are all things except exercises for the reason? Persevere then until thou shalt have made all things thine own, as the stomach which is strength-*

ened makes all things its own, as the blazing fire makes flame and brightness out of everything that is thrown into it ; '—when he says : 'Thou wilt not cease to be miserable till thy mind is in such a condition, that, what luxury is to those who enjoy pleasure, such shall be to thee, in every matter which presents itself, the doing of the things which are conformable to man's constitution ; for a man ought to consider as an enjoyment everything which it is in his power to do according to his own nature,—and it is in his power everywhere.' In this sense it is, indeed, most true that 'all things have been made for the sake of rational beings ;' that 'all things work together for good.'

In general, however, the action Marcus Aurelius prescribes is action which every sound nature must recognize as right, and the motives he assigns are motives which every clear reason must recognize as valid. And so he remains the especial friend and comforter of all clear-headed and scrupulous, yet pure-hearted and upward-striving men, in those ages most especially that walk by sight, not by faith, and yet have no open vision : he cannot give such souls, perhaps, all they yearn for, but he gives them much ; and what he gives them, they can receive.

Yet no, it is not for what he thus gives them that such souls love him most ! it is rather because of the emotion which lends to his voice so touching an accent, it is because he too yearns as they do for something unattained by him. What an affinity for Christianity had this persecutor of the Christians ! the effusion of Christianity, its relieving tears, its happy self-sacrifice, were the very element, one feels, for which his soul longed : they were

near him, they brushed him, he touched them, he passed them by. One feels, too, that the Marcus Aurelius one reads must still have remained even had they presented themselves to him, in a great measure himself; he would have been no Justin: but how would Christianity have affected him? in what measure would it have changed him? Granted that he might have found, like the *Alogi* in ancient and modern times, in the most beautiful of the Gospels, the Gospel which has leavened Christendom most powerfully, the Gospel of St. John, too much Greek metaphysics, too much *gnosis*; granted that this gospel might have looked too like what he knew already to be a total surprise to him: what then would he have said to the Sermon on the Mount, to the twenty-sixth chapter of St. Matthew? what would have become of his notions of the *exitiabilis superstitio*, of the 'obstinacy of the Christians'? Vain question! yet the greatest charm of Marcus Aurelius is that he makes us ask it. We see him wise, just, self-governed, tender, thankful, blameless; yet, with all this, agitated, stretching out his arms for something beyond—*tendentemque manus ripae ulterioris amore*.—*Essays in Criticism*.

### BURKE AND THE FRENCH REVOLUTION

It is the fashion to treat Burke's writings on the French Revolution as superannuated and conquered by the event; as the eloquent but unphilosophical tirades of bigotry and prejudice. I will not deny that they are often disfigured by the violence and passion of the moment, and that in some directions Burke's view was bounded, and his observation therefore at fault; but on the whole, and for those who can make the needful

corrections, what distinguishes these writings is their profound, permanent, fruitful, philosophical truth; they contain the true philosophy of an epoch of concentration, dissipate the heavy atmosphere which its own nature is apt to engender round it, and make its resistance rational instead of mechanical.

But Burke is so great because, almost alone in England, he brings thought to bear upon politics, he saturates politics with thought; it is his accident that his ideas were at the service of an epoch of concentration, not of an epoch of expansion; it is his characteristic that he so lived by ideas, and had such a source of them welling up within him, that he could float even an epoch of concentration and English Tory politics with them. It does not hurt him that Dr. Price and the Liberals were enraged with him; it does not even hurt him that George the Third and the Tories were enchanted with him. His greatness is that he lived in a world which neither English Liberalism nor English Toryism is apt to enter;—the world of ideas, not the world of catchwords and party habits. So far is it from being really true of him that he ‘to party gave up what was meant for mankind’, that at the very end of his fierce struggle with the French Revolution, after all his invectives against its false pretensions, hollowness, and madness, with his sincere conviction of its mischievousness, he can close a memorandum on the best means of combating it, some of the last pages he ever wrote,—the *Thoughts on French Affairs*, in December 1791,—with these striking words:

‘The evil is stated, in my opinion, as it exists.

The remedy must be where power, wisdom, and information, I hope, are more united with good intentions than they can be with me. I have done with this subject, I believe, for ever. It has given me many anxious moments for the last two years. *If a great change is to be made in human affairs, the minds of men will be fitted to it; the general opinions and feelings will draw that way. Every fear, every hope will forward it; and then they who persist in opposing this mighty current in human affairs, will appear rather to resist the decrees of Providence itself, than the mere designs of men. They will not be resolute and firm, but perverse and obstinate.*

That return of Burke upon himself has always seemed to me one of the finest things in English literature, or indeed in any literature. That is what I call living by ideas; when one side of a question has long had your earnest support, when all your feelings are engaged, when you hear all round you no language but one, when your party talks this language like a steam-engine and can imagine no other,—still to be able to think, still to be irresistibly carried, if so it be, by the current of thought to the opposite side of the question, and, like Balaam, to be unable to speak anything *but what the Lord has put in your mouth*. I know nothing more striking, and I must add that I know nothing more un-English.—*Essays in Criticism*.

### CHARACTERISTICS OF THE ENGLISH MIND

WHAT are the essential characteristics of the spirit of our nation? Not, certainly, an open and clear mind, not a quick and flexible intelligence.

Our greatest admirers would not claim for us that we have these in a pre-eminent degree; they might say that we had more of them than our detractors gave us credit for; but they would not assert them to be our essential characteristics. They would rather allege, as our chief spiritual characteristics, energy and honesty; and, if we are judged favourably and positively, not invidiously and negatively, our chief characteristics are, no doubt, these;—energy and honesty, not an open and clear mind, not a quick and flexible intelligence. Openness of mind and flexibility of intelligence were very signal characteristics of the Athenian people in ancient times; everybody will feel that. Openness of mind and flexibility of intelligence are remarkable characteristics of the French people in modern times; at any rate, they strikingly characterize them as compared with us; I think everybody, or almost everybody, will feel that. I will not now ask what more the Athenian or the French spirit has than this, nor what shortcomings either of them may have as a set-off against this; all I want now to point out is that they have this, and that we have it in a much lesser degree.

Let me remark, however, that not only in the moral sphere, but also in the intellectual and spiritual sphere, energy and honesty are most important and fruitful qualities; that, for instance, of what we call genius, energy is the most essential part. So, by assigning to a nation energy and honesty as its chief spiritual characteristics,—by refusing to it, as at all eminent characteristics, openness of mind and flexibility of intelligence,—we do not by any means, as some people might

at first suppose, relegate its importance and its power of manifesting itself with effect from the intellectual to the moral sphere. We only indicate its probable special line of successful activity in the intellectual sphere, and, it is true, certain imperfections and failings to which, in this sphere, it will always be subject. Genius is mainly an affair of energy; and poetry is mainly an affair of genius; therefore, a nation whose spirit is characterized by energy may well be eminent in poetry;—and we have Shakespeare. Again, the highest reach of science is, one may say, an inventive power, a faculty of divination, akin to the highest power exercised in poetry; therefore, a nation whose spirit is characterized by energy may well be eminent in science;—and we have Newton. Shakespeare and Newton: in the intellectual sphere there can be no higher names. And what that energy, which is the life of genius, above everything demands and insists upon, is freedom; entire independence of all authority, prescription, and routine,—the fullest room to expand as it will. Therefore, a nation whose chief spiritual characteristic is energy, will not be very apt to set up, in intellectual matters, a fixed standard, an authority, like an academy. By this it certainly escapes certain real inconveniences and dangers, and it can, at the same time, as we have seen, reach undeniably splendid heights in poetry and science. On the other hand, some of the requisites of intellectual work are specially the affair of quickness of mind and flexibility of intelligence. The form, the method of evolution, the precision, the proportions, the relations of the parts to the whole, in an intellectual work, depend mainly upon them.

And these are the elements of an intellectual work which are really most communicable from it, which can most be learned and adopted from it, which have, therefore, the greatest effect upon the intellectual performance of others. Even in poetry, these requisites are very important; and the poetry of a nation, not eminent for the gifts on which they depend, will, more or less, suffer by this shortcoming. In poetry, however, they are, after all, secondary, and energy is the first thing; but in prose they are of first-rate importance. In its prose literature, therefore, and in the routine of intellectual work generally, a nation with no particular gifts for these will not be so successful. These are what, as I have said, can to a certain degree be learned and appropriated, while the free activity of genius cannot. Academies consecrate and maintain them, and, therefore, a nation with an eminent turn for them naturally establishes academies. So far as routine and authority tend to embarrass energy and inventive genius, academies may be said to be obstructive to energy and inventive genius, and, to this extent, to the human spirit's general advance. But then this evil is so much compensated by the propagation, on a large scale, of the mental aptitudes and demands which an open mind and a flexible intelligence naturally engender, genius itself, in the long run, so greatly finds its account in this propagation, and bodies like the French Academy have such power for promoting it, that the general advance of the human spirit is perhaps, on the whole, rather furthered than impeded by their existence.

How much greater is our nation in poetry than prose! how much better, in general, do the

productions of its spirit show in the qualities of genius than in the qualities of intelligence! One may constantly remark this in the work of individuals; how much more striking, in general, does any Englishman,—of some vigour of mind, but by no means a poet,—seem in his verse than in his prose! No doubt his verse suffers from the same defects which impair his prose, and he cannot express himself with real success in it; but how much more powerful a personage does he appear in it, by dint of feeling, and of originality and movement of ideas, than when he is writing prose! With a Frenchman of like stamp, it is just the reverse: set him to write poetry, he is limited, artificial, and impotent; set him to write prose, he is free, natural, and effective. The power of French literature is in its prose-writers, the power of English literature is in its poets. Nay, many of the celebrated French poets depend wholly for their fame upon the qualities of intelligence which they exhibit,—qualities which are the distinctive support of prose; many of the celebrated English prose-writers depend wholly for their fame upon the qualities of genius and imagination which they exhibit,—qualities which are the distinctive support of poetry. But, as I have said, the qualities of genius are less transferable than the qualities of intelligence; less can be immediately learned and appropriated from their product; they are less direct and stringent intellectual agencies, though they may be more beautiful and divine.  
—*Essays in Criticism.*

## GEORGE MEREDITH

1828-1909

## A YOUTHFUL WANDERER

A GENTLEMAN of his acquaintance called on him one evening to take him out for a walk. My father happened to be playing with me when this gentleman entered our room : and he jumped up from his hands and knees, and abused him for intruding on his privacy, but afterwards he introduced him to me as Shylock's great-great-great-grandson, and said that Shylock was satisfied with a pound, and his descendant wanted two hundred pounds, or else all his body : and this, he said, came of the emigration of the family from Venice to England. My father only seemed angry, for he went off with Shylock's very great grandson arm-in-arm, exclaiming, ' To the Rialto ! ' When I told Mrs. Waddy about the visitor, she said, ' Oh, dear ! oh, dear ! then I'm afraid your sweet papa won't return very soon, my pretty pet.' We waited a number of days, until Mrs. Waddy received a letter from him. She came full-dressed into my room, requesting me to give her twenty kisses for papa, and I looked on while she arranged her blue bonnet at the glass. The bonnet would not fix in its place. At last she sank down crying in a chair, and was all brown silk, and said that how to appear before a parcel of dreadful men, and perhaps a live duke into the bargain, was more than she knew, and more than could be expected of a lone widow woman. ' Not for worlds ! ' she answered my petition to accompany her. She would not, she said, have me go to

my papa *there* for anything on earth ; my papa would perish at the sight of me ; I was not even to wish to go. And then she exclaimed, ' Oh, the blessed child's poor papa ! ' and that people were cruel to him, and would never take into account his lovely temper, and that everybody was his enemy, when he ought to be sitting with the highest in the land. I had realized the extremity of my forlorn state on a Sunday that passed empty of my father, which felt like his having gone for ever. My nursemaid came in to assist in settling Mrs. Waddy's bonnet above the six crisp curls, and while they were about it I sat quiet, plucking now and then at the brown silk, partly to beg to go with it, partly in jealousy and love at the thought of its seeing him from whom I was so awfully separated. Mrs. Waddy took fresh kisses off my lips, assuring me that my father would have them in twenty minutes, and I was to sit and count the time. My nursemaid let her out. I pretended to be absorbed in counting, till I saw Mrs. Waddy pass by the window. My heart gave a leap of pain. I found the street-door open and no one in the passage, and I ran out, thinking that Mrs. Waddy would be obliged to take me if she discovered me by her side in the street.

I was by no means disconcerted at not seeing her immediately. Running on from one street to another, I took the turnings with unhesitating boldness, as if I had a destination in view. I must have been out near an hour before I understood that Mrs. Waddy had eluded me ; so I resolved to enjoy the shop-windows with the luxurious freedom of one whose speculations on those glorious things all up for show are no longer distracted by

the run of time and a nursemaid. Little more than a glance was enough, now that I knew I could stay as long as I liked. If I stopped at all, it was rather to exhibit the bravado of liberty than to distinguish any particular shop with my preference: all were equally beautiful; so were the carriages; so were the people. Ladies frequently turned to look at me, perhaps because I had no covering on my head; but they did not interest me in the least. I should have been willing to ask them or any one where the Peerage lived, only my mind was quite full, and I did not care. I felt sure that a great deal of walking would ultimately bring me to St. Paul's or Westminster Abbey; to anything else I was indifferent.

Toward sunset my frame was struck as with an arrow by the sensations of hunger on passing a cook's-shop. I faltered along, hoping to reach a second one, without knowing why I had dragged my limbs from the first. There was a boy in ragged breeches, no taller than myself, standing tiptoe by the window of a very large and brilliant pastry-cook's. He persuaded me to go into the shop and ask for a cake. I thought it perfectly natural to do so, being hungry; but when I reached the counter and felt the size of the shop, I was abashed, and had to repeat the nature of my petition twice to the young woman presiding there.

'Give you a cake, little boy?' she said. 'We don't give cakes, we sell them.'

'Because I am hungry,' said I, pursuing my request.

Another young woman came, laughing and shaking lots of ringlets.

'Don't you see he's not a common boy? he

doesn't whine,' she remarked, and handed me a stale bun, saying, 'Here, Master Charles, and you needn't say thank you.'

'My name is Harry Richmond, and I thank you very much,' I replied.

I heard her say, as I went out, 'You can see he's a gentleman's son.' The ragged boy was awaiting me eagerly. 'Gemini! you're a lucky one,' he cried; 'here, come along, curly-poll.' I believe that I meant to share the bun with him, but of course he could not be aware of my beneficent intentions; so he treated me as he thought I was for treating him, and making one snatch at the bun, ran off, cramming it into his mouth. I stood looking at my hand. I learnt in that instant what thieving was, and begging, and hunger, for I would have perished rather than have asked for another cake, and as I yearned for it in absolute want of food, the boy's ungenerous treatment of me came down in a cloud on my reason. I found myself being led through the crush of people, by an old gentleman, to whom I must have related an extraordinary rigmarole. He shook his head, saying that I was unintelligible; but the questions he put to me, 'Why had I no hat on in the open street?—Where did my mother live?—What was I doing out alone in London?' were so many incitements to autobiographical composition to an infant mind, and I tumbled out my history afresh each time that he spoke. He led me into a square, stooping his head to listen all the while; but when I perceived that we had quitted the region of shops, I made myself quite intelligible by stopping short and crying: '*I am so hungry.*' He nodded and said, 'It's no use

cross-examining an empty stomach. You'll do me the favour to dine with me, my little man. We'll talk over your affairs by and by.'

My alarm at having left the savoury street of shops was not soothed until I found myself sitting at table with him, and a nice young lady, and an old one who wore a cap, and made loud remarks on my garments and everything I did. I was introduced to them as the little boy dropped from the sky. The old gentleman would not allow me to be questioned before I had eaten. It was a memorable feast. I had soup, fish, meat, and pastry, and, for the first time in my life, a glass of wine. How they laughed to see me blink and cough after I had swallowed half the glass like water. At once my tongue was unloosed. I seemed to rise right above the roofs of London, beneath which I had been but a wandering atom a few minutes ago. I talked of my wonderful father, and Great Will, and Pitt, and the Peerage. I amazed them with my knowledge. When I finished a long recital of Great Will's chase of the deer, by saying that I did not care about politics (I meant, in my own mind, that Pitt was dull in comparison), they laughed enormously, as if I had fired them off.

'Do you know what you are, sir?' said the old gentleman; he had frowning eyebrows and a merry mouth: 'you're a comical character.'

I felt interested in him, and asked him what he was. He informed me that he was a lawyer, and ready to be pantaloons to my clown, if I would engage him.

'Are you in the Peerage?' said I.

'Not yet,' he replied.

'Well, then,' said I, 'I know nothing about you.'

The young lady screamed with laughter. 'Oh, you funny little boy; you killing little creature!' she said, and coming round to me, lifted me out of my chair, and wanted to know if I knew how to kiss.

'Oh, yes; I've been taught that,' said I, giving the salute without waiting for the invitation; 'but,' I added, 'I don't care about it much.'

She was indignant, and told me she was going to be offended; so I let her understand that I liked being kissed and played with in the morning before I was up, and if she would come to my house ever so early, she would find me lying next the wall and ready for her.

'And who lies outside?' she asked.

'That's my papa,' I was beginning to say, but broke the words with a sob, for I seemed to be separated from him now by the sea itself.

They petted me tenderly. My story was extracted by alternate leading questions from the old gentleman and timely caresses from the ladies. I could tell them everything except the name of the street where I lived. My midnight excursion from the house of my grandfather excited them chiefly; also my having a mother alive who perpetually fanned her face and wore a ball-dress and a wreath; things that I remembered of my mother. The ladies observed that it was clear I was a romantic child. I noticed that the old gentleman said 'Humph,' very often, and his eyebrows were like a rook's nest in a tree when I spoke of my father walking away with Shylock's descendant and not since returning to me. A big book was fetched out of his library, in which he read my grandfather's name. I heard him mention it aloud.

I had been placed on a stool beside a tea-tray near the fire, and there I saw the old red house of Riversley, and my mother dressed in white, and my Aunt Dorothy; and they all complained that I had ceased to love them, and must go to bed, to which I had no objection. Somebody carried me up and undressed me, and promised me a great game of kissing in the morning.

The next day in the strange house I heard that the old gentleman had sent one of his clerks down to my grandfather at Riversley, and communicated with the constables in London; and, by and by, Mrs. Waddy arrived, having likewise visited those authorities, one of whom supported her claims upon me. But the old gentleman wished to keep me until his messenger returned from Riversley. He made all sorts of pretexts. In the end, he insisted on seeing my father, and Mrs. Waddy, after much hesitation, and even weeping, furnished the address: upon hearing which, spoken aside to him, he said, 'I thought so.' Mrs. Waddy entreated him to be respectful to my father, who was, she declared, his superior, and, begging everybody's pardon present, the superior of us all, through no sin of his own, that caused him to be so unfortunate; and a real Christian and pattern, in spite of outsides, though as true a gentleman as ever walked, and by rights should be amongst the highest. She repeated 'amongst the highest' reprovingly, with the ears of barley in her blue bonnet shaking, and her hands clasped tight in her lap. Old Mr. Bannerbridge (that was the old gentleman's name) came back very late from his visit to my father, so late that he said it would be cruel to let me go out in the street after my

bed-time. Mrs. Waddy consented to my remaining, on the condition of my being surrendered to her at nine o'clock, and no later, the following morning.

I was assured by Mr. Bannerbridge that my father's health and appetite were excellent; he gave me a number of unsatisfying messages, all the rest concerning his interview he whispered to his daughter and his sister, Miss Bannerbridge, who said they hoped they would have news from Hampshire very early, so that the poor child might be taken away by the friends of his infancy. I could understand that my father was disapproved of by them, and that I was a kind of shuttlecock flying between two battledores; but why they pitied me I could not understand. There was a great battle about me when Mrs. Waddy appeared punctual to her appointed hour. The victory was hers, and I, her prize, passed a whole day in different conveyances, the last of which landed us miles away from London, at the gates of an old drooping, mossed, and streaked farmhouse that was like a wall-flower in colour.—*The Adventures of Harry Richmond.*

#### THE YOUTHFUL WANDERER AT DIPWELL FARM

IN rain or in sunshine this old farmhouse had a constant resemblance to a wall-flower; and it had the same moist earthy smell, except in the kitchen, where John and Martha Thresher lived, apart from their furniture. All the fresh eggs, and the butter stamped with three bees, and the pots of honey, the fowls, and the hare lifted out of the hamper by his hind legs, and the country

loaves smelling heavenly, which used to come to Mrs. Waddy's address in London, and appear on my father's table, were products of Dipwell farm, and presents from her sister, Martha Thresher. On receiving this information I felt at home in a moment, and asked right off, 'How long am I to stay here?—Am I going away to-morrow?—What's going to be done with me?' The women found these questions of a youthful wanderer touching. Between kissings and promises of hens to feed, and eggs that were to come of it, I settled into contentment. A strong impression was made on me by Mrs. Waddy's saying, 'Here, Master Harry, your own papa will come for you; and you may be sure he will, for I have his word he will, and he's not one to break it, unless his country's against him; and for his darling boy he'd march against cannons. So here you'll sit and wait for him, won't you?' I sat down immediately, looking up. Mrs. Waddy and Mrs. Thresher raised their hands. I had given them some extraordinary proof of my love for my father. The impression I received was, that sitting was the thing to conjure him to me.

'Where his heart's not concerned,' Mrs. Waddy remarked of me flatteringly, 'he's shrewd as a little schoolmaster.'

'He've a bird's-nesting eye,' said Mrs. Thresher, whose face I was studying.

John Thresher wagered I would be a man before either of them reached that goal. But whenever he spoke he suffered correction on account of his English.

'More than his eating and his drinking, that child's father worrits about his learning to speak

the language of a British gentleman,' Mrs. Waddy exclaimed. 'Before that child your *h*'s must be like the panting of an engine—to please his father. He'd stop me carrying the dinnertray on meat-dish hot, and I'm to repeat what I said, to make sure the child haven't heard anything ungrammatical. The child's nursemaid he'd lecture so, the poor girl would come down to me ready to bend double, like a bundle of nothing, his observations so took the pride out of her. That 's because he 's a father who knows his duty to the child: "Child!" says he, "man! ma'am." It 's just as you, John, when you sow your seed you think of your harvest. So don't take it ill of me, John; I beg of you be careful of your English. Turn it over as you're about to speak.'

'Change loads on the road, you mean,' said John Thresher. 'Na, na, he 's come to settle nigh a weedy field, if you like, but his crop ain't nigh reaping yet. Hark you, Mary Waddy, who're a widde, which 's as much as say, an unocc'pied mind, there 's cockney, and there 's country, and there 's school. Mix the three, strain, and throw away the sediment. Now, yon 's my view.'

His wife and Mrs. Waddy said reflectively, in a breath, 'True!'

'Drink or no, that 's the trick o' brewery,' he added.

They assented. They began praising him, too, like meek creatures.

'What John says is worth listening to, Mary. You may be over-careful. A stew 's a stew, and not a boiling to shreds, and you want a steady fire, and not a furnace.'

'Oh, I quite agree with John, Martha: we

must take the good and the evil in a world like this.'

'Then I'm no scholar, and you're at ease,' said John.

Mrs. Waddy put her mouth to his ear.

Up went his eyebrows, wrinkling arches over a petrified stare.

In some way she had regained her advantage. 'Are't sure of it?' he inquired.

'Pray, don't offend me by expressing a doubt of it,' she replied, bowing.

John Thresher poised me in the very centre of his gaze. He declared he would never have guessed that, and was reproved, inasmuch as he might have guessed it. He then said that I could not associate with any of the children thereabout, and my dwelling in the kitchen was not to be thought of. The idea of my dwelling in the kitchen seemed to be a serious consideration with Mrs. Martha likewise. I was led into the rooms of state. The sight of them was enough. I stamped my feet for the kitchen, and rarely in my life have been happier than there, dining and supping with John and Martha and the farm-labourers, expecting my father across the hills, and yet satisfied with the sun. To hope, and not be impatient, is really to believe, and this was my feeling in my father's absence. I knew he would come, without wishing to hurry him. He had the world beyond the hills; I this one, where a slow full river flowed from the sounding mill under our garden wall, through long meadows. In winter the wild ducks made letters of the alphabet flying. On the other side of the copses bounding our home, there was a park containing trees old as the History of England,

John Thresher said, and the thought of their venerable age enclosed me comfortably. He could not tell me whether he meant as old as the book of English History; he fancied he did, for the furrow-track follows the plough close upon; but no one exactly could swear when that (the book) was put together. At my suggestion, he fixed the trees to the date of the Heptarchy, a period of heavy ploughing. Thus begirt by Saxon times, I regarded Riversley as a place of extreme baldness, a Greenland, untrodden by my Alfred and my Harold. These heroes lived in the circle of Dipwell, confidently awaiting the arrival of my father. He sent me once a glorious letter. Mrs. Waddy took one of John Thresher's pigeons to London, and in the evening we beheld the bird cut the sky like an arrow, bringing round his neck a letter warm from him I loved. Planet communicating with planet would be not more wonderful to men than words of his to me, travelling in such a manner. I went to sleep, and awoke imagining the bird bursting out of heaven.

Meanwhile there was an attempt to set me moving again. A strange young man was noticed in the neighbourhood of the farm, and he accosted me at Leckham fair. 'I say, don't we know one another? How about your grandfather the squire, and your aunt, and Mr. Bannerbridge? I've got news for you.'

Not unwilling to hear him, I took his hand, leaving my companion, the miller's little girl, Mabel Sweetwinter, at a toy-stand, while Bob, her brother and our guardian, was shying sticks in a fine attitude. 'Yes, and your father, too,' said the young man; 'come along and see him;

you can run ? ' I showed him how fast. We were pursued by Bob, who fought for me, and won me, and my allegiance instantly returned to him. He carried me almost the whole of the way back to Dipwell. Women must feel for the lucky heroes who win them something of what I felt for mine ; I kissed his bloody face, refusing to let him wipe it. John Thresher said to me at night, ' Ay, now you've got a notion of boxing ; and will you believe it, Master Harry, there's people fools enough to want to tread that ther' first rate pastime under foot ? I speak truth, and my word for 't, they'd better go in petticoats. Let clergymen preach as in duty bound ; you and I'll uphold a manful sport, we will, and a cheer for Bob ! '

He assured me, and he had my entire faith, that boxing was England's natural protection from the foe. The comfort of having one like Bob to defend our country from invasion struck me as inexpressible. Lighted by John Thresher's burning patriotism, I entered the book of the History of England at about the pace of a cart-horse, with a huge waggon at my heels in the shape of John. There was no moving on until he was filled. His process of receiving historical knowledge was to fight over again the personages who did injury to our honour as a nation, then shake hands and be proud of them. ' For where we ain't quite successful we're cunning,' he said ; ' and we not being able to get rid of William the Conqueror, because he's got a will of his own and he won't budge, why, we takes and makes him one of ourselves ; and no disgrace in that, I should hope ! He paid us a compliment, don't you see, Master Harry ? he wanted to be an Englishman. " Can you this ? "

says we, sparrin' up to him. "Pretty middlin'," says he, and does it well. "Well then," says we, "then you're one of us, and we'll beat the world;" and did so.'

John Thresher had a laborious mind; it cost him beads on his forehead to mount to these heights of meditation. He told me once that he thought one's country was like one's wife: you were born in the first, and married to the second, and had to learn all about them afterwards, ay, and make the best of them. He recommended me to mix, strain, and throw away the sediment, for that was the trick o' brewery. Every puzzle that beset him in life resolved to this cheerful precept, the value of which, he said, was shown by clear brown ale, the drink of the land. Even as a child I felt that he was peculiarly an Englishman. Tales of injustice done on the Niger river would flush him in a heat of wrath till he cried out for fresh taxes to chastise the villains. Yet at the sight of the beggars at his gates he groaned at the taxes existing, and enjoined me to have pity on the poor taxpayer when I lent a hand to patch the laws. I promised him I would unreservedly, with a laugh, but with a sincere intention to legislate in a direct manner on his behalf. He, too, though he laughed, thanked me kindly.

I was clad in black for my distant mother. Mrs. Waddy brought down a young man from London to measure me, so that my mourning attire might be in the perfect cut of fashion. 'The child's papa would strip him if he saw him in a country tailor's funeral suit,' she said, and seemed to blow a wind of changes on me that

made me sure my father had begun to stir up his part of the world. He sent me a prayer in his own handwriting to say for my mother in heaven. I saw it flying up between black edges whenever I shut my eyes. Martha Thresher dosed me for liver. Mrs. Waddy found me pale by the fireside, and prescribed iron. Both agreed upon high-feeding, and the apothecary agreed with both in everything, which reconciled them, for both good women loved me so heartily they were near upon disputing over the medicines I was to consume.

Under such affectionate treatment I betrayed the alarming symptom that my imagination was set more on my mother than on my father: I could not help thinking that for any one to go to heaven was stranger than to drive to Dipwell, and I had this idea when my father was clasping me in his arms; but he melted it like snow off the fields. He came with postillions in advance of him wearing crape rosettes, as did the horses. We were in the cricket-field, where Dipwell was playing its first match of the season, and a Dipwell lad, furious to see the elevens commit such a breach of the rules and decency as to troop away while the game was hot, and surround my father, flung the cricket-ball into the midst and hit two or three of the men hard. My father had to shield him from the consequences. He said he liked that boy; and he pleaded for him so winningly and funnily that the man who was hurt most laughed loudest.

Standing up in the carriage, and holding me by the hand, he addressed them by their names: 'Sweetwinter, I thank you for your attention to my son; and you, Thribble; and you, my man; and you, Baker; Rippengale, and you; and you,

Jupp ; ' as if he knew them personally. It was true he nodded at random. Then he delivered a short speech, and named himself a regular subscriber to their innocent pleasures. He gave them money, and scattered silver coin among the boys and girls, and praised John Thresher, and Martha, his wife, for their care of me, and pointing to the chimneys of the farm, said that the house there was holy to him from henceforth, and he should visit it annually if possible, but always in the month of May, and in the shape of his subscription, as certain as the cowslip. The men, after their fit of cheering, appeared unwilling to recommence their play, so he alighted and delivered the first ball, and then walked away with my hand in his, saying : ' Yes, my son, we will return to them tenfold what they have done for you. The eleventh day of May shall be a day of pleasure for Dipwell while I last, and you will keep it in memory of me when I am gone. And now to see the bed you have slept in.'

Martha Thresher showed him the bed, showed him flowers I had planted, and a Spanish chestnut tree just peeping.

' Ha ! ' said he, beaming at every fresh sight of my doings : ' madam, I am your life-long debtor and friend ! ' He kissed her on the cheek.

John Thresher cried out : ' Why, dame, you trembles like a maid.'

She spoke very faintly, and was red in the face up to the time of our departure. John stood like a soldier. We drove away from a cheering crowd of cricketers and farm labourers, as if discharged from a great gun. ' A royal salvo ! ' said my father, and asked me earnestly whether I had

forgotten to reward and take a particular farewell of any one of my friends. I told him I had forgotten no one, and thought it was true, until on our way up the sandy lane, which offered us a last close view of the old wall-flower farm front, I saw little Mabel Sweetwinter, often my play-fellow and bedfellow, a curly-headed girl, who would have danced on Sunday for a fairing, and eaten gingerbread nuts during a ghost-story. She was sitting by a furze-bush in flower, cherishing in her lap a lamb that had been worried. She looked half up at me, and kept looking so, but would not nod. Then good-bye, thought I, and remembered her look when I had forgotten that of all the others.

### SIR WILLOUGHBY PATERNE

THESE little scoundrel imps, who have attained to some respectability as the dogs and pets of the Comic Spirit, had been curiously attentive three years earlier, long before the public announcement of his engagement to the beautiful Miss Durham, on the day of Sir Willoughby's majority, when Mrs. Mountstuart Jenkinson said her word of him. Mrs. Mountstuart was a lady certain to say the remembered, if not the right, thing. Again and again was it confirmed on days of high celebration, days of birth or bridal, how sure she was to hit the mark that rang the bell; and away her word went over the country: and had she been an uncharitable woman she could have ruled the county with an iron rod of caricature, so sharp was her touch. A grain of malice would have sent county faces and characters awry into the currency.

She was wealthy, and kindly, and resembled our mother Nature in her reasonable antipathies to one or two things which none can defend, and her decided preference of persons that shone in the sun. Her word sprang out of her. She looked at you, and forth it came : and it stuck to you, as nothing laboured or literary could have adhered. Her saying of Lætitia Dale : ‘ Here she comes, with a romantic tale on her eyelashes,’ was a portrait of Lætitia. And that of Vernon Whitford : ‘ He is a Phœbus Apollo turned fasting friar,’ painted the sunken brilliancy of the lean long-walker and scholar at a stroke.

Of the young Sir Willoughby, her word was brief ; and there was the merit of it on a day when he was hearing from sunrise to the setting of the moon salutes in his honour, songs of praise and Ciceronian eulogy. Rich, handsome, courteous, generous, lord of the Hall, the feast, and the dance, he excited his guests of both sexes to a holiday of flattery. And, says Mrs. Mountstuart, while grand phrases were mouthing round about him : ‘ *You see he has a leg.*’

That you saw, of course. But after she had spoken you saw much more. Mrs. Mountstuart said it just as others utter empty nothings, with never a hint of a stress. Her word was taken up, and very soon, from the extreme end of the long drawing-room, the circulation of something of Mrs. Mountstuart’s was distinctly perceptible. Lady Patterne sent a little Hebe down, skirting the dancers, for an accurate report of it ; and even the inappreciative lips of a very young lady transmitting the word could not damp the impression of its weighty truthfulness. It was perfect !

Adulation of the young Sir Willoughby's beauty and wit, and aristocratic bearing and mien, and of his moral virtues, was common: welcome if you like, as a form of homage; but common, almost vulgar, beside Mrs. Mountstuart's quiet little touch of nature. In seeming to say infinitely less than others, as Miss Isabel Patterne pointed out to Lady Busshe, Mrs. Mountstuart comprised all that the others had said, by showing the needlessness of allusions to the saliently evident. She was the aristocrat reproving the provincial. 'He is everything you have had the goodness to remark, ladies and dear sirs, he talks charmingly, dances divinely, rides with the air of a commander-in-chief, has the most natural grand pose possible without ceasing for a moment to be the young English gentleman he is. Alcibiades, fresh from a Louis XIV perruquier, could not surpass him: whatever you please: I could outdo you in sublime comparisons, were I minded to pelt him. Have you noticed that he has a leg?'

So might it be amplified. A simple-seeming word of this import is the triumph of the spiritual, and where it passes for coin of value, the society has reached a high refinement: Arcadian by the æsthetic route. Observation of Willoughby was not, as Miss Eleanor Patterne pointed out to Lady Culmer, drawn down to the leg, but directed to estimate him from the leg upward. That, however, is prosaic. Dwell a short space on Mrs. Mountstuart's word; and whither, into what fair region, and with how decorously voluptuous a sensation, do not we fly, who have, through mournful veneration of the Martyr Charles, a coy attachment to the Court of his Merrie Son, where the leg was ribanded

with love-knots and reigned. Oh! it was a naughty Court. Yet have we dreamed of it as the period when an English cavalier was grace incarnate; far from the boor now hustling us in another sphere; beautifully mannered, every gesture dulcet. And if the ladies were . . . we will hope they have been traduced. But if they were, if they were too tender, ah! gentlemen were gentlemen then—worth perishing for! There is this dream in the English country; and it must be an aspiration after some form of melodious gentlemanliness which is imagined to have inhabited the island at one time; as among our poets the dream of the period of a circle of chivalry here is encouraged for the pleasure of the imagination.

Mrs. Mountstuart touched a thrilling chord. 'In spite of men's hateful modern costume, you see he has a leg.'

That is, the leg of the born cavalier is before you: and obscure it as you will, dress degenerately, there it is for ladies who have eyes. You see it: or, you see *he* has it. Miss Isabel and Miss Eleanor disputed the incidence of the emphasis, but surely, though a slight difference of meaning may be heard, either will do: many, with a good show of reason, throw the accent upon *leg*. And the ladies knew for a fact that Willoughby's leg was exquisite; he had a cavalier court-suit in his wardrobe. Mrs. Mountstuart signified that the leg was to be seen because it was a burning leg. There it is, and it *will* shine through. He has the leg of Rochester, Buckingham, Dorset, Suckling; the leg that smiles, that winks, is obsequious to you, yet perforce of beauty self-satisfied; that twinkles to a tender midway

between imperiousness and seductiveness, audacity and discretion; between 'you shall worship me,' and 'I am devoted to you;' is your lord, your slave, alternately and in one. It is a leg of ebb and flow and high-tide ripples. Such a leg, when it has done with pretending to retire, will walk straight into the hearts of women. Nothing so fatal to them.

Self-satisfied it must be. Humbleness does not win multitudes or the sex. It must be vain to have a sheen. Captivating melodies (to prove to you the unavoidableness of self-satisfaction when you know that you have hit perfection), listen to them closely, have an inner pipe of that conceit almost ludicrous when you detect the chirp.

And you need not be reminded that he has the leg without the naughtiness. You see eminent in him what we would fain have brought about in a nation that has lost its leg in gaining a possibly cleaner morality. And that is often contested; but there is no doubt of the loss of the leg.

Well, footmen and courtiers and Scottish highlanders, and the corps de ballet, draymen too, have legs, and staring legs, shapely enough. But what are they? not the modulated instrument we mean—simply legs for leg-work, dumb as the brutes. Our cavalier's is the poetic leg, a portent, a valiance. He has it as Cicero had a tongue, it is a lute to scatter songs to his mistress; a rapier, is she obdurate. In sooth a leg with brains in it, soul.

And its shadows are an ambush, its lights a surprise. It blushes, it pales, can whisper, exclaim. It is a peep, a part revelation, just sufferable, of the Olympian God—Jove playing carpet-knight.

For the young Sir Willoughby's family and his thoughtful admirers, it is not too much to say that Mrs. Mountstuart's little word fetched an epoch of our history to colour the evening of his arrival at man's estate. He was all that Merrie Charles's Court should have been, subtracting not a sparkle from what it was. Under this light he danced, and you may consider the effect of it on his company.

He had received the domestic education of a prince. Little princes abound in a land of heaped riches. Where they have not to yield military service to an Imperial master, they are necessarily here and there dainty during youth, sometimes unmanageable, and as they are bound in no personal duty to the State, each is for himself, with full present, and what is more, luxurious prospective leisure for the practice of that allegiance. They are sometimes enervated by it: that must be in continental countries. Happily our climate and our brave blood precipitate the greater number upon the hunting-field, to do the public service of heading the chase of the fox, with benefit to their constitutions. Hence a manly as well as useful race of little princes, and Willoughby was as manly as any. He cultivated himself, he would not be outdone in popular accomplishments. Had the standard of the public taste been set in philosophy, and the national enthusiasm centred in philosophers, he would at least have worked at books. He did work at science, and had a laboratory. His admirable passion to excel, however, was chiefly directed in his youth upon sport; and so great was the passion in him, that it was commonly the presence of rivals which led him to the declaration of love.

He knew himself nevertheless to be the most constant of men in his attachment to the sex. He had never discouraged Lætitia Dale's devotion to him, and even when he followed in the sweeping tide of the beautiful Constantia Durham (whom Mrs. Mountstuart called 'The Racing Cutter'), he thought of Lætitia, and looked at her. She was a shy violet.

Willoughby's comportment while the showers of adulation drenched him might be likened to the composure of Indian Gods undergoing worship, but unlike them he reposed upon no seat of amplitude to preserve him from a betrayal of intoxication; he had to continue tripping, dancing, exactly balancing himself, head to right, head to left, addressing his idolaters in phrases of perfect choiceness. This is only to say, that it is easier to be a wooden idol than one in the flesh; yet Willoughby was equal to his task. The little prince's education teaches him that he is other than you, and by virtue of the instruction he receives, and also something, we know not what, within, he is enabled to maintain his posture where you would be tottering. Urchins upon whose curly pates grey seniors lay their hands with conventional encomium and speculation look older than they are immediately, and Willoughby looked older than his years, not for want of freshness, but because he felt that he had to stand eminently and correctly poised.

Hearing of Mrs. Mountstuart's word on him, he smiled and said 'It is at her service.'

The speech was communicated to her, and she proposed to attach a dedicatory strip of silk. And then they came together, and there was wit and

repartee suitable to the electrical atmosphere of the dancing-room, on the march to a magical hall of supper. Willoughby conducted Mrs. Mountstuart to the supper-table.

‘Were I,’ said she, ‘twenty years younger, I think I would marry you, to cure my infatuation.’

‘Then let me tell you in advance, madam,’ said he, ‘that I will do everything to obtain a new lease of it, except divorce you.’

They were infinitely wittier, but so much was heard and may be reported.

‘It makes the business of choosing a wife for him superhumanly difficult!’ Mrs. Mountstuart observed, after listening to the praises she had set going again when the ladies were weeded of us, in Lady Patterne’s Indian room, and could converse unhampered upon their own ethereal themes.

‘Willoughby will choose a wife for himself,’ said his mother.—*The Egoist*.

## HENRY KINGSLEY

1830-76

### STORM AND SHIPWRECK

UP in his room he could hear that the wind was worse than ever, not rushing up in great gusts and sinking again, as in ordinary gales, but keeping up one continued unvarying scream against the house, which was terrible to hear.

He got frightened at being alone; afraid of finding some ghostly thing at his elbow, which had approached him unheard through the noise. He began, indeed, to meditate upon going down-

stairs, when Cuthbert, coming into the next room, reassured him, and he got into bed.

This wasn't much better though, for there was a thing in a black hood came and stood at the head of his bed ; and though he could not see it, he could feel the wind of its heavy draperies as it moved. Moreover, a thing like a caterpillar, with a cat's head, about two feet long, came creep-creeping up the counterpane ; which he valiantly smote, and found it to be his handkerchief—and still the unvarying roar went on till it was unendurable.

He got up and went to his brother's room, and was cheered to find a light burning ; he came softly in and called 'Cuthbert.'

'Who is there ?' asked he, with a sudden start.

'It's I,' said Charles ; 'can you sleep ?'

'Not I,' said Cuthbert, sitting up. 'I can hear people talking in the wind. Come into bed ; I'm so glad you're come.'

Charles lay down by his brother, and they talked about ghosts for a long time. Once their father came in with a light from his bedroom next door, and sat on the bed talking, as if he, too, was glad of company, and after that they dozed off and slept.

It was in the grey light of morning that they awoke together and started up. The wind was as bad as ever, but the whole house was still, and they stared terrified at one another.

'What was it ?' whispered Charles.

Cuthbert shook his head and listened again. As he was opening his mouth to speak it came again, and they knew it was that which woke them. A sound like a single footstep on the floor above,

light enough, but which shook the room. Cuthbert was out of bed in an instant, tearing on his clothes. Charles jumped out too, and asked him, 'What is it?'

'A gun!'

Charles well knew what awful disaster was implied in those words. The wind was N.W., setting into the bay. The ship that fired that gun was doomed.

He heard his father leap out of bed and ring furiously at his bell. Then doors began to open and shut, and voices and rapid footsteps were heard in the passage. In ten minutes the whole terrified household were running hither and thither, about they hardly knew what. The men were pale, and some of the women were beginning to whimper and wring their hands; when Densil, Lewis the agent, and Mackworth, came rapidly down the staircase and passed out. Mackworth came back, and told the women to put on hot water and heat blankets. Then Cuthbert joined him, and they went together; and directly after Charles found himself between two men-servants, being dragged rapidly along towards the low headland which bounded the bay on the east.

When they came to the beach, they found the whole village pushing on in a long straggling line the same way as themselves. The men were walking singly, either running, or going very fast; and the women were in knots of twos and threes, straggling along and talking excitedly, with much gesticulation.

'There's some of the elect on board, I'll be bound,' Charles heard one woman say, 'as will be supping in glory this blessed night.'

‘Ay, ay,’ said an old woman, ‘I’d sooner be taken to rest sudden, like they ’re going to be, than drag on till all the faces you know are gone before.’

‘My boy,’ said another, ‘was lost in a typhoon in the China sea. Darn they lousy typhoons! I wonder if he thought of his mother afore he went down.’

Among such conversation as this, with the terrible, ceaseless thunder of the surf upon the left, Charles, clinging tight to his two guardians, made the best weather of it he could, until they found themselves on the short turf of the promontory, with their faces seaward, and the water right and left of them. The cape ran out about a third of a mile, rather low, and then abruptly ended in a cone of slate, beyond which, about two hundred yards at sea, was that terrible sunken rock, ‘the Wolf,’ on to which, as sure as death, the flowing tide carried every stick which was embayed. The tide was making; a ship was known to be somewhere in the bay; it was blowing a hurricane; and what would you more?

They hurried along as well as they could among the sharp slates which rose through the turf, until they came to where the people had halted. Charles saw his father, the agent, Mackworth, and Cuthbert together, under a rock; the villagers were standing around, and the crowd was thickening every moment. Every one had his hand over his eyes, and was peering due to windward, through the driving scud.

They had stopped at the foot of the cone, which was between them and the sea, and some more adventurous had climbed partly up it, if, perhaps,

they might see farther than their fellows ; but in vain : they all saw and heard the same—a blinding white cauldron of wind-driven spray below, and all around, filling every cranny—the howling storm.

A quarter of an hour since she fired last, and no signs of her yet. She must be carrying canvas and struggling for life, ignorant of the four-knot stream. Some one says she may have gone down—hush ! who spoke ?

Old Sam Evans had spoken. He had laid his hand on the squire's shoulder, and said, ' There she is.' And then arose a hubbub of talking from the men, and every one crowded on his neighbour and tried to get nearer. And the women moved hurriedly about, some moaning to themselves, and some saying, ' Ah, poor dear ! ' ' Ah, dear Lord ! there she is, sure enough.'

She hove in sight so rapidly that, almost as soon as they could be sure of a dark object, they saw that it was a ship—a great ship about 900 tons ; that she was dismasted, and that her decks were crowded. They could see that she was unmanageable, turning her head hither and thither as the sea struck her, and that her people had seen the cliff at the same moment, for they were hurrying aft, and crowding on to the bulwarks.

Charles and his guardians crept up to his father's party. Densil was standing silent, looking on the lamentable sight ; and, as Charles looked at him, he saw a tear run down his cheek, and heard him say, ' Poor fellows ! ' Cuthbert stood staring intently at the ship, with his lips slightly parted. Mackworth, like one who studies a picture, held his elbow in one hand, and kept the other over

his mouth ; and the agent cried out, ' A troop-ship, by gad. Dear ! dear ! '

It is a sad sight to see a fine ship beyond control. It is like seeing one one loves gone mad. Sad under any circumstances ; how terrible it is when she is bearing on with her, in her mad Bacchante's dance, a freight of living human creatures to untimely destruction !

As each terrible feature and circumstance of the catastrophe became apparent to the lookers-on, the excitement became more intense. Forward and in the waist, there was a considerable body of seamen clustered about under the bulwarks—some half-stripped. In front of the cuddy door, between the poop and the mainmast, about forty soldiers were drawn up, with whom were three officers, to be distinguished by their blue coats and swords. On the quarter-deck were seven or eight women, two apparently ladies, one of whom carried a baby. A well-dressed man, evidently the captain, was with them ; but the cynosure of all eyes was a tall man in white trousers, at once and correctly judged to be the mate, who carried in his arms a little girl.

The ship was going straight upon the rock, now only marked as a whiter spot upon the whitened sea, and she was fearfully near it, rolling and pitching, turning her head hither and thither, fighting for her life. She had taken comparatively little water on board as yet ; but now a great sea struck her forward, and she swung with her bow towards the rock, from which she was distant not a hundred yards. The end was coming. Charles saw the mate slip off his coat and shirt, and take the little girl again. He saw the lady with the

baby rise very quietly and look forward ; he saw the sailors climbing on the bulwarks ; he saw the soldiers standing steady in two scarlet lines across the deck ; he saw the officers wave their hands to one another, and then he hid his face in his hands, and sobbed as if his heart would break.

They told him after how the end had come ; she had lifted up her bows defiantly, and brought them crashing down upon the pitiless rock as though in despair. Then her stern had swung round, and a merciful sea broke over her, and hid her from their view, though above the storm they plainly heard her brave old timbers crack ; then she floated off, with bulwarks gone, sinking, and drifted out of sight round the headland, and, though they raced across the headland, and waited a few breathless minutes for her to float round into sight again, they never saw her any more. The *Warren Hastings* had gone down in fifteen fathom. And now there was a new passion introduced into the tragedy, to which it had hitherto been a stranger—Hope. The wreck of part of the mainmast and half the main-topmast, which they had seen, before she struck, lumbering the deck, had floated off, and there were three, four, five men clinging to the futtock shrouds ; and then, they saw the mate with the child hoist himself on to the spar, and part his dripping hair from his eyes.

The spar had floated into the bay, into which they were looking, into much calmer water ; but, directly to leeward, the swell was tearing at the black slate rocks, and in ten minutes it would be on them. Every man saw the danger, and Densil, running down to the water's edge, cried :

‘ Fifty pound to any one who will take ’em

a rope ! Fifty gold sovereigns down to-night !  
Who 's going ? '

Jim Matthews was going, and had been going before he heard of the fifty pound—that was evident ; for he was stripped, and out on the rocks with the rope round his waist. He stepped from the bank of slippery seaweed into the heaving water, and then his magnificent limbs were in full battle with the tide. A roar announced his success. As he was seen clambering on to the spar, a stouter rope was paid out ; and very soon it and its burden were high and dry upon the little half-moon of sand which ended the bay.

Five sailors, the first mate, and a bright-eyed little girl were their precious prize. The sailors lay about upon the sand, and the mate, untying the shawl that bound her to him, put the silent and frightened child into the hands of a woman who stood close by.

The poor little thing was trembling in every limb. ' If you please,' she said to the woman, ' I should like to go to mamma. She is standing with baby on the quarter-deck. Mr. Archer, will you take me back to mamma, please ? She will be frightened if we stay away.'

' Well, a-deary me,' said the honest woman, ' she'll break my heart, a darling ; mamma 's in heaven, my tender, and baby too.'

' No, indeed,' said the child eagerly ; ' she 's on the quarter-deck. Mr. Archer, Mr. Archer ! '

The mate, a tall, brawny, whiskerless, hard-faced man, about six-and-twenty, who had been thrust into a pea-coat, now approached.

' Where 's mamma, Mr. Archer ? ' said the child.

‘Where’s mamma, my lady-bird? Oh, dear! oh, dear!’

‘And where’s the ship, and Captain Dixon, and the soldiers?’

‘The ship, my pretty love,’ said the mate, putting his rough hand on the child’s wet hair; ‘why the good ship *Warren Hastings*, Dixon master, is a-sunk beneath the briny waves, my darling; and all on board of her, being good sailors and brave soldiers, is doubtless at this moment in glory.’

The poor little thing set up a low wailing cry, which went to the hearts of all present; then the women carried her away, and the mate, walking between Mackworth and Densil, headed the procession homeward to the hall.—*Ravenshoe*.

#### A LOVE SCENE

CHARLES slipped away from the dinner-table early that evening, and, while Lady Ascot was having her after-dinner nap, had a long conversation with Adelaide in the dark, which was very pleasant to one of the parties concerned, at any rate.

‘Adelaide, I am going home to-morrow.’

‘Are you really? Are you going so suddenly?’

‘I am, positively. I got a letter from home to-day. Are you very sorry or very glad?’

‘I am very sorry, Charles. You are the only friend I have in the world to whom I can speak as I like. Make me a promise.’

‘Well?’

‘This is the last night we shall be together. Promise that you won’t be rude and sarcastic as you are sometimes—almost always, now, to poor me—but talk kindly, as we used to do.’

‘Very well,’ said Charles. ‘And you promise you won’t be taking such a black view of the state of affairs as you do in general. Do you remember the conversation we had the day the colt was tried?’

‘I remember.’

‘Well, don’t talk like that, you know.’

‘I won’t promise that. The time will come very soon when we shall have no more pleasant talks together.’

‘When will that be?’

‘When I am gone out for a governess.’

‘What wages will you get? You will not get so much as some girls, because you are so pretty and so wilful, and you will lead them such a deuce of a life.’

‘Charles, you said you wouldn’t be rude.’

‘I choose to be rude. I have been drinking wine, and we are in the dark, and aunt is asleep and snoring, and I shall say just what I like.’

‘I’ll wake her.’

‘I should like to see you. What shall we talk about? What an old Roman Lord Saltire is. He talked about his son who was killed, to me to-day, just as I should talk about a pointer dog.’

‘Then he thought he had been showing some signs of weakness. He always speaks of his son like that when he thinks he has been betraying some feeling.’

‘I admire him for it,’ said Charles.—‘So you are going to be a governess, eh?’

‘I suppose so.’

‘Why don’t you try being barmaid at a public-house? Welter would get you a place directly; he has great influence in the licensed victualling

way. You might come to marry a commercial traveller, for anything you know.'

'I would not have believed this,' she said, in a fierce, low voice. 'You have turned against me and insult me, because—— Unkind, unjust, ungentlemanlike.'

He heard her passionately sobbing in the dark, and the next moment he had her in his arms, and was covering her face with kisses.

'Lie there, my love,' he said; 'that is your place. All the world can't harm or insult my Adelaide while she is there. Why did you fly from me and repulse me, my darling, when I told you I was your own true love?'

'Oh, let me go, Charles,' she said, trying, ever so feebly, to repulse him. 'Dear Charles, pray do; I am frightened.'

'Not till you tell me you love me, false one.'

'I love you more than all the world.'

'Traitor! And why did you repulse me and laugh at me?'

'I did not think you were in earnest.'

'Another kiss for that wicked, wicked falsehood. Do you know that this rustication business has all come from the despair consequent on your wicked behaviour the other day?'

'You said Welter caused it, Charles. But oh, please let me go.'

'Will you go as a governess now?'

'I will do nothing but what you tell me.'

'Then give me one, your own, own self, and I will let you go.'

Have the reader's feelings of horror, indignation, astonishment, outraged modesty, or ridicule, given him time to remember that all this went on in the

dark, within six feet of an unconscious old lady ? Such, however, was the case. And scarcely had Adelaide determined that it was time to wake her, and barely had she bent over her for that purpose, when the door was thrown open, and—enter attendants with lights. Now, if the reader will reflect a moment, he will see what an awful escape they had ; for the chances were about a thousand to one in favour of two things having happened : first, the groom of the chambers might have come into the room half a minute sooner ; and second, they might have sat as they were half a minute longer ; in either of which cases, Charles would have been discovered with his arm round Adelaide's waist, and a fearful scandal would have been the consequence. And I mention this as a caution to young persons in general, and to remind them that if they happen to be sitting hand in hand, it is no use to jump apart and look very red just as the door opens, because the incomer can see what they have been about as plain as if he had been there. On this occasion, also, Charles and Adelaide set down as usual to their own sagacity what was the result of pure accident.

Adelaide was very glad to get away after tea, for she felt rather guilty and confused. On Charles's offering to go, however, Lady Ascot, who had been very silent and glum all tea-time, requested him to stay, as she had something serious to say to him. Which set that young gentleman speculating whether she could possibly have been awake before the advent of candles, and caused him to await her pleasure with no small amount of trepidation.

Her ladyship began by remarking that digitalis

was invaluable for palpitation, and that she had also found camomile, combined with gentle purgatives, efficient for the same thing, when suspected to proceed from stomach. She opined that, if this weather continued, there would be heavy running for the Cambridgeshire, and Commissioner would probably stand as well as any horse. And then, having, like a pigeon, taken a few airy circles through stable-management, theology, and agriculture, she descended on her subject, and frightened Charles out of his five wits, by asking him if he didn't think Adelaide a very nice girl.

Charles decidedly thought she was a very nice girl; but he rather hesitated, and said—'Yes, that she was charming.'

'Now, tell me, my dear,' said Lady Ascot, manœuvring a great old fan, 'for young eyes are quicker than old ones. Did you ever remark anything between her and Welter?'

Charles caught up one of his legs, and exclaimed, 'The devil!'

'What a shocking expression, my dear! Well, I agree with you. I fancy I have noticed that they entertained a decided preference for one another. Of course, Welter will be throwing himself away, and all that sort of thing, but he is pretty sure to do that. I expect every time he comes home that he will bring a wife from behind the bar of a public house. Now, Adelaide——'

'Aunt! Lady Ascot! Surely you are under a mistake. I never saw anything between them.'

'H'm.'

'I assure you I never did. I never heard Welter speak of her in that sort of way, and I don't think she cares for him.'

‘What reason have you for thinking *that*?’

‘Well—why, you know it’s hard to say. The fact is, I have rather a partiality for Adelaide myself, and I have watched her in the presence of other men.’

‘Oho! Do you think she cares for you? Do you know she won’t have a sixpence?’

‘We shall have enough to last till next year, aunt; and then the world is to come to an end, you know, and we shan’t want anything.’

‘Never you mind about the world, sir. Don’t you be flippant and impertinent, sir. Don’t evade my question, sir. Do you think Adelaide cares for you, sir?’

Charles looked steadily and defiantly at his aunt, and asked her whether she didn’t think it was very difficult to find out what a girl’s mind really was—whereby we may conclude that he was profiting by Lord Saltire’s lesson on the command of feature.

‘This is too bad, Charles,’ broke out Lady Ascot, ‘to put me off like this, after your infamous and audacious conduct of this evening—after kissing and hugging that girl under my very nose——’

‘I thought it!’ said Charles, with a shout of laughter. ‘I thought it, you were awake all the time!’

‘I was not awake all the time, sir——’

‘You were awake quite long enough, it appears, aunty. Now, what do you think of it?’

At first Lady Ascot would think nothing of it, but that the iniquity of Charles’s conduct was only to be equalled by the baseness and ingratitude of Adelaide’s; but by degrees she was brought to think that it was possible that some good might come of an engagement; and, at length, becoming

garrulous on this point, it leaked out by degrees, that she had set her heart on it for years, that she had noticed for some time Charles's partiality for her with the greatest pleasure, and recently had feared that something had disturbed it. In short, that it was her pet scheme, and that she had been coming to an explanation that very night, but had been anticipated.—*Ravenshoe.*

## SAMUEL BUTLER

1835–1902

### DR. SKINNER

His personal appearance was not particularly prepossessing. He was about the middle height, portly, and had a couple of fierce grey eyes, that flashed fire from beneath a pair of great bushy beetling eyebrows and overawed all who came near him. It was in respect of his personal appearance, however, that, if he was vulnerable at all, his weak place was to be found. His hair when he was a young man was red, but after he had taken his degree he had a brain fever which caused him to have his head shaved; when he reappeared he did so wearing a wig, and one which was a good deal further off red than his own hair had been. He not only never discarded his wig, but year by year it had edged itself a little more and a little more off red, till by the time he was forty, there was not a trace of red remaining, and his wig was brown.

When Doctor Skinner was a very young man, hardly more than five and twenty, the headmastership of Roughborough Grammar School had fallen

vacant, and he had been unhesitatingly appointed. The result justified the selection. Doctor Skinner's pupils distinguished themselves at whichever University they went to. He moulded their minds after the model of his own, and stamped an impression on them which was indelible in after-life; whatever else a Roughborough man might be, he was sure to make every one feel that he was a God-fearing earnest Christian and a Liberal, if not a Radical, in politics. Some boys of course were incapable of appreciating the beauty and loftiness of Doctor Skinner's nature. Some such boys, alas! there will be in every school; upon them Doctor Skinner's hand was very properly a heavy one. His hand was against them, and theirs against him during the whole time of the connexion between them. They not only disliked him, but they hated all that he more especially embodied, and throughout their lives disliked all that reminded them of him. Such boys, however, were in a minority, the spirit of the place being decidedly Skinnerian.

I once had the honour of playing chess with this great man. It was during the Christmas holidays, and I had come down to Roughborough for a few days to see Alethea Pontifex (who was then living there) on business. It was very gracious of him to take notice of me, for if I was a light of literature at all it was of the very lightest kind. . . .

The game had been a long one, and at half past nine, when supper came in, we had each of us a few pieces remaining. 'What will you take for supper, Dr. Skinner?' said Mrs. Skinner in a silvery voice.

He made no answer for some time, but at last

in a tone of almost superhuman solemnity, he said first, 'Nothing,' and then 'Nothing whatever.'

By and by, however, I had a sense come over me as though I was nearer the consummation of all things than I had ever yet been. The room seemed to grow dark, as an expression came over Dr. Skinner's face, which showed that he was about to speak. The expression gathered force, the room grew darker and darker. 'Stay,' he at length added, and I felt that there at any rate was an end to suspense which was rapidly becoming unbearable. 'Stay—I may presently take a glass of water—and a small piece of bread and butter.'

As he said the word 'butter' his voice sank to a hardly audible whisper; then there was a sigh as though of relief when the sentence was concluded, and the universe this time was safe.

Another ten minutes of solemn silence finished the game. The doctor rose quickly from his seat and placed himself at the supper table. 'Mrs. Skinner,' he exclaimed jauntily, 'what are those mysterious looking objects surrounded by potatoes?'

'Those are oysters, Dr. Skinner.'

'Give me some and give Overton some.'

And so on till he had eaten a good plate of oysters, a scallop shell of minced veal nicely browned, some apple tart, and a hunk of bread and cheese. This was the small piece of bread and butter.

The cloth was now removed and tumblers with teaspoons in them, a lemon or two and a jug of boiling water were placed upon the table. Then the great man unbent. His face beamed.

'And what shall it be to drink?' he exclaimed

persuasively, 'Shall it be brandy and water? No. It shall be gin and water. Gin is the more wholesome liquor.' So gin it was, hot and stiff too.

Who can wonder at him, or do anything but pity him? Was he not headmaster of Roughborough School? To whom had he owed money at any time? Whose ox had he taken, whose ass had he taken, or whom had he defrauded? What whisper had ever been breathed against his moral character? If he had become rich it was by the most honourable of means—his literary attainments; over and above his great works of scholarship, his 'Meditations upon the Epistle and Character of St. Jude' had placed him amongst the most popular of English theologians; it was so exhaustive that no one who bought it need ever meditate upon the subject again—indeed it exhausted all who had anything to do with it. He made £5,000 by this work alone and would very likely make another £5,000 before he died. A man who had done all this and wanted a piece of bread and butter had a right to announce the fact with some pomp and circumstance. Nor should his words be taken without searching for what he used to call a 'deeper and more hidden meaning.' Those who searched for this even in his lightest utterances would not be without their reward. They would find that 'bread and butter' was Skinnerese for oyster-patties and apple tart, and 'gin hot' the true translation of water.—*The Way of all Flesh*.

#### DR. ZOO

I HAD expected that he would now rapidly recover, and was disappointed to see him get as I thought decidedly worse. Indeed, before long

I thought him looking so ill that I insisted on his going with me to consult one of the most eminent doctors in London. This gentleman said there was no acute disease but that my young friend was suffering from nervous prostration, the result of long and severe mental suffering, from which there was no remedy except time, prosperity, and rest. . . .

He thought a little and then said :

‘I have found the Zoological Gardens of service to many of my patients. I should prescribe for Mr. Pontifex a course of the larger mammals. Don’t let him think he is taking them medicinally, but let him go to their house twice a week for a fortnight, and stay with the hippopotamus, the rhinoceros, and the elephants, till they begin to bore him. The monkeys are not a wide enough cross ; they do not stimulate sufficiently. The larger carnivora are unsympathetic. The reptiles are worse than useless, and the marsupials are not much better. Birds again, except parrots, are not beneficial ; he may look at them now and again, but with the elephants and the pig tribe generally he should mix just now as freely as possible.

Then you know, to prevent monotony I should send him, say, to morning service at the Abbey, before he goes. He need not stay longer than the *Te Deum*. I don’t know why but *Jubilates* are seldom satisfactory. Let him look in at the Abbey, and sit quietly in Poets’ Corner till the main part of the music is over. Let him do this two or three times, not more, before he goes to the Zoo.

‘Then next day send him down to Gravesend by boat. By all means let him go to the theatres in the evenings—and then let him come to me again in a fortnight.’

Had the doctor been less eminent in his profession I should have doubted whether he was in earnest, but I knew him to be a man of business who would neither waste his own time nor that of his patient. As soon as we were out of the house we took a cab to Regent's Park, and spent a couple of hours in sauntering round the different houses. Perhaps it was on account of what the doctor had told me, but I certainly became aware of a feeling I had never experienced before. I mean I was receiving an influx of new life, or deriving new ways of looking at life—which is the same thing—by the process. I found the doctor quite right in his estimate of the larger mammals as the ones which on the whole were most beneficial, and observed that Ernest who had heard nothing of what the doctor had said to me, lingered instinctively in front of them. As for the elephants, especially the baby elephant, he seemed to be drinking in large draughts of their lives to the re-creation and regeneration of his own.

We dined in the gardens, and I noticed with pleasure that Ernest's appetite was already improved. Since this time, whenever I have been a little out of sorts myself I have at once gone up to Regent's Park, and have invariably been benefited. I mention this here in the hope that some one or other of my readers may find the hint a useful one.

At the end of his fortnight my hero was much better, more so even than our friend the doctor had expected. 'Now,' he said, 'Mr. Pontifex may go abroad, and the sooner the better. Let him stay a couple of months.'

This was the first Ernest had heard about his going abroad, and he talked about my not being

able to spare him for so long. I soon made this all right.

‘It is now the beginning of April,’ said I, ‘go down to Marseilles at once and take steamer to Nice. Then saunter down the Riviera to Genoa—from Genoa go to Florence, Rome and Naples, and come home by way of Venice and the Italian Lakes.’

‘And won’t you come too?’ said he, eagerly.

I said I did not mind if I did, so we began to make our arrangements next morning, and completed them within a very few days.—*The Way of All Flesh.*

## WALTER PATER

1839–94

### LEONARDO DA VINCI

HIS life has three divisions—thirty years at Florence, nearly twenty years at Milan, then nineteen years of wandering, till he sinks to rest under the protection of Francis the First at the Château de Clou. The dishonour of illegitimacy hangs over his birth. Piero Antonio, his father, was of a noble Florentine house, of Vinci in the Val d’Arno, and Leonardo, brought up delicately among the true children of that house, was the love-child of his youth, with the keen puissant nature such children often have. We see him in his youth fascinating all men by his beauty, improvising music and songs, buying the caged birds and setting them free as he walked the streets of Florence, fond of odd bright dresses and spirited horses.

From his earliest years he designed many objects, and constructed models in relief, of which Vasari

mentions some of women smiling. Signor Piero thinking over this promise in the child, took him to the workshop of Andrea del Verrocchio, then the most famous artist in Florence. Beautiful objects lay about there—reliquaries, pyxes, silver images for the Pope's chapel at Rome, strange fancy work of the middle age keeping odd company with fragments of antiquity, then but lately discovered. Another student Leonardo may have seen there—a boy into whose soul the level light and aërial illusions of Italian sunsets had passed, in after days famous as Perugino. Verrocchio was an artist of the earlier Florentine type, carver, painter, and worker in metals in one ; designer, not of pictures only, but of all things for sacred or household use, drinking-vessels, ambries, instruments of music, making them all fair to look upon, filling the common ways of life with the reflection of some far-off brightness ; and years of patience had refined his hand till his work was now sought after from distant places.

It happened that Verrocchio was employed by the brethren of Vallombrosa to paint the Baptism of Christ, and Leonardo was allowed to finish an angel in the left-hand corner. It was one of those moments in which the progress of a great thing—here that of the art of Italy—presses hard and sharp on the happiness of an individual, through whose discouragement and decrease humanity, in more fortunate persons, comes a step nearer to its final success.

For beneath the cheerful exterior of the mere well-paid craftsman, chasing brooches for the copes of Santa Maria Novella, or twisting metal screens for the tombs of the Medici, lay the ambitious

desire of expanding the destiny of Italian art by a larger knowledge and insight into things—a purpose in art not unlike Leonardo's still unconscious purpose ; and often, in the modelling of drapery, or of a lifted arm, or of hair cast back from the face, there came to him something of the freer manner and richer humanity of a later age. But in this Baptism the pupil had surpassed the master ; and Verrocchio turned away as one stunned, and as if his sweet earlier work must thereafter be distasteful to him, from the bright animated angel of Leonardo's hand.—*Notes on Leonardo da Vinci*, 1869.

### LEONARDO AND LA GIOCONDA

LA GIOCONDA is, in the truest sense, Leonardo's masterpiece—the revealing instance of his mode of thought and work. In suggestiveness, only the *Melancholia* of Dürer is comparable to it ; and no crude symbolism disturbs the effect of its subdued and graceful mystery. We all know the face and hands of the figure, set in its marble chair, in that cirque of fantastic rocks, as in some faint light under sea. Perhaps of all ancient pictures time has chilled it least.<sup>1</sup> As often happens with works in which invention seems to reach its limit, there is an element in it given to, not invented by, the master. In that inestimable folio of drawings, once in the possession of Vasari, were certain designs by Verrocchio—faces of such impressive beauty that Leonardo in his boyhood copied them many times. It is hard not to connect with these designs of the elder by-past master, as with its

<sup>1</sup> Yet for Vasari there was some further magic of crimson in the lips and cheeks, lost for us.

germinal principle, the unfathomable smile, always with a touch of something sinister in it, which plays all over Leonardo's work. Besides, the picture is a portrait. From childhood we see this image defining itself on the fabric of his dreams ; and but for express historical testimony, we might fancy that this was but his ideal lady, embodied and beheld at last. What was the relationship of a living Florentine to this creature of his thought ? By what strange affinities had she and the dream grown thus apart, yet so closely together ? Present from the first incorporeal in Leonardo's thought, dimly traced in the designs of Verrocchio, she is found present at last in *Il Giocondo's* house. That there is much of mere portraiture in the picture is attested by the legend that by artificial means, the presence of mimes and flute-players, that subtle expression was protracted on the face. Again, was it in four years and by renewed labour never really completed, or in four months, and as by stroke of magic, that the image was projected ?

The presence that thus so strangely rose beside the waters is expressive of what in the ways of a thousand years man had come to desire. Hers is the head upon which all 'the ends of the world are come,' and the eyelids are a little weary. It is a beauty wrought out from within upon the flesh—the deposit, little cell by cell, of strange thoughts and fantastic reveries and exquisite passions. Set it for a moment beside one of those white Greek goddesses or beautiful women of antiquity, and how would they be troubled by this beauty, into which the soul with all its maladies has passed ? All the thoughts and experiences of the world have

etched and moulded there in that which they have of power to refine and make expressive the outward form—the animalism of Greece, the lust of Rome, the reverie of the middle age with its spiritual ambition and imaginative loves, the return of the Pagan world, the sins of the Borgias. She is older than the rocks among which she sits ; like the vampire, she has been dead many times, and learned the secrets of the grave ; and has been a diver in deep seas, and keeps their fallen day about her ; and trafficked for strange webs with Eastern merchants ; and, as Leda, was the mother of Helen of Troy, and, as Saint Anne, the mother of Mary ; and all this has been to her but as the sound of lyres and flutes, and lives only in the delicacy with which it has moulded the changing lineaments and tinged the eyelids and the hands. The fancy of a perpetual life, sweeping together ten thousand experiences, is an old one ; and modern thought has conceived the idea of humanity as wrought upon by, and summing up in itself, all modes of thought and life. Certainly, Lady Lisa might stand as the embodiment of the old fancy, the symbol of the modern idea.

During these years at Florence Leonardo's history is the history of his art ; he himself is lost in the bright cloud of it. The outward history begins again in 1502, with a wild journey through central Italy, which he makes as the chief engineer of Caesar Borgia. The biographer, putting together the stray jottings of his MSS., may follow him through every day of it, up the strange tower of Siena, which looks towards Rome, elastic like a bent bow, down to the sea-shore at Piombino, each place appearing as fitfully as in a fever dream.

One other great work was left for him to do—a work all trace of which soon vanished—the Battle of the Standard, in which he had for his rival Michael Angelo. The citizens of Florence, desiring to decorate the walls of the great council chambers, had offered the work for competition, and any subject might be chosen from the Florentine wars of the fifteenth century. Michael Angelo chose for his cartoon an incident of the war with Pisa, in which the Florentine soldiers, bathing in the Arno, are surprised by the sound of trumpets, and run to arms. His design has reached us only in an old engraving, which, perhaps, would help us less than what we remember of the background of his Holy Family in the Uffizj to imagine in what superhuman form, such as might have beguiled the heart of an earlier world, those figures may have risen from the water. Leonardo chose an incident from the battle of Anghiari, in which two parties of soldiers fight for a standard. Like Michael Angelo's, his cartoon is lost, and has come to us only in sketches and a fragment of Rubens. Through the accounts given we may discern some lust of terrible things in it, so that even the horses tore each other with their teeth ; and yet one fragment of it, in a drawing of his at Florence, is far different—a waving field of lovely armour, the chased edgings running like lines of sunlight from side to side. Michael Angelo was twenty-seven years old ; Leonardo more than fifty ; and Raffaele, then nineteen years old, visiting Florence for the first time, came and watched them as they worked. —*Notes on Leonardo da Vinci.*

## THE DEATH OF MARIUS

FOR there remained also, for the old earthy creature still within him, that great blessedness of physical slumber. To sleep, to lose one's self in sleep:—that, as he had always recognized, was a good thing. And it was after a space of deep sleep that he awoke amid the murmuring voices of the people who had kept and tended him so carefully through his sickness, now kneeling around his bed: and what he heard confirmed, in the then perfect clearness of his soul, the inevitable suggestion of his own bodily feelings. He had often dreamt he was condemned to die, that the hour, with wild thoughts of escape, was arrived; and waking, with the sun all around him, in complete liberty of life, had been full of gratitude for his place there, alive still in the land of the living. He read surely now in the manner, the doings of these people, some of whom were passing out through the doorway, where the heavy sunlight in very deed lay, that his last morning was come, and turned to think once more of the beloved. Often had he fancied of old that not to die on a dark or rainy day might itself have a little alleviating grace or favour about it. The people around his bed were praying fervently:—*Abi! Abi! Anima Christiana!* In the moments of his extreme helplessness their mystic bread had been placed, had descended like a snow-flake from the sky, between his lips. Gentle fingers had applied to hands and feet, to all those old passage-ways of the senses, through which the world had come and gone for him, now so dim and obstructed, a medicinable oil. It was the same people, who in the grey, austere evening

of that day took up his remains, and buried them secretly with their accustomed prayers ; but with joy also, holding his death, according to their generous view in this matter, to have been of the nature of a martyrdom, and martyrdom, as the church had always said, a kind of sacrament with plenary grace.—*Marius the Epicurean.*

## HENRY JAMES

1843–1916

## DAISY MILLER AT VEVEY

SHE talked to Winterbourne as if she had known him a long time. He found it very pleasant. It was many years since he had heard a young girl talk so much. It might have been said of this unknown young lady, who had come and sat down beside him upon a bench, that she chattered. She was very quiet, she sat in a charming tranquil attitude ; but her lips and her eyes were constantly moving. She had a soft, slender, agreeable voice, and her tone was decidedly sociable. She gave Winterbourne a history of her movements and intentions, and those of her mother and brother, in Europe, and enumerated, in particular, the various hotels at which they had stopped. ‘That English lady in the cars,’ she said—‘Miss Featherstone—asked me if we didn’t all live in hotels in America. I told her I had never been in so many hotels in my life as since I came to Europe. I have never seen so many—it’s nothing but hotels.’ But Miss Miller did not make this remark with a querulous accent ; she appeared to be in the best humour

with everything. She declared that the hotels were very good, when once you got used to their ways, and that Europe was perfectly sweet. She was not disappointed—not a bit. Perhaps it was because she had heard so much about it before. She had ever so many intimate friends that had been there ever so many times. And then she had had ever so many dresses and things from Paris. Whenever she put on a Paris dress she felt as if she were in Europe.

‘It was a kind of a wishing-cap,’ said Winterbourne.

‘Yes,’ said Miss Miller, without examining this analogy; ‘it always made me wish I was here. But I needn’t have done that for dresses. I am sure they send all the pretty ones to America; you see the most frightful things here. The only thing I don’t like,’ she proceeded, ‘is the society. There isn’t any society; or, if there is, I don’t know where it keeps itself. Do you? I suppose there is some society somewhere, but I haven’t seen anything of it. I’m very fond of society, and I have always had a great deal of it. I don’t mean only in Schenectady, but in New York. I used to go to New York every winter. In New York I had lots of society. Last winter I had seventeen dinners given me; and three of them were by gentlemen,’ added Daisy Miller. ‘I have more friends in New York than in Schenectady—more gentlemen friends; and more young lady friends too,’ she resumed in a moment. She paused again for an instant; she was looking at Winterbourne with all her prettiness in her lively eyes and in her light, slightly monotonous smile. ‘I have always had,’ she said, ‘a great deal of gentlemen’s society.’

Poor Winterbourne was amused, perplexed, and decidedly charmed. He had never yet heard a young girl express herself in just this fashion; never, at least, save in cases where to say such things seemed a kind of demonstrative evidence of a certain laxity of deportment. And yet was he to accuse Miss Daisy Miller of actual or potential *inconduite*, as they said at Geneva? He felt that he had lived at Geneva so long that he had lost a good deal; he had become dishabituated to the American tone. Never, indeed, since he had grown old enough to appreciate things, had he encountered a young American girl of so pronounced a type as this. Certainly she was very charming; but how deucedly sociable! Was she simply a pretty girl from New York State—were they all like that, the pretty girls who had a good deal of gentlemen's society? Or was she also a designing, an audacious, an unscrupulous young person? Winterbourne had lost his instinct in this matter, and his reason could not help him. Miss Daisy Miller looked extremely innocent. Some people had told him that, after all, American girls were exceedingly innocent; and others had told him that, after all, they were not. He was inclined to think Miss Daisy Miller was a flirt—a pretty American flirt. He had never, as yet, had any relations with young ladies of this category. He had known, here in Europe, two or three women—persons older than Miss Daisy Miller, and provided, for respectability's sake, with husbands—who were great coquettes—dangerous, terrible women, with whom one's relations were liable to take a serious turn. But this young girl was not a coquette in that sense; she was very unsophisticated; she

was only a pretty American flirt. Winterbourne was almost grateful for having found the formula that applied to Miss Daisy Miller. He leaned back in his seat ; he remarked to himself that she had the most charming nose he had ever seen ; he wondered what were the regular conditions and limitations of one's intercourse with a pretty American flirt. It presently became apparent that he was on the way to learn.

'Have you been to that old castle ?' asked the young girl, pointing with her parasol to the far-gleaming walls of the Château de Chillon.

'Yes, formerly, more than once,' said Winterbourne. 'You too, I suppose, have seen it ?'

'No ; we haven't been there. I want to go there dreadfully. Of course I mean to go there. I wouldn't go away from here without having seen that old castle.'

'It's a very pretty excursion,' said Winterbourne, 'and very easy to make. You can drive, you know, or you can go by the little steamer.'

'You can go in the cars,' said Miss Miller.

'Yes ; you can go in the cars,' Winterbourne assented.

'Our courier says they take you right up to the castle,' the young girl continued. 'We were going last week ; but my mother gave out. She suffers dreadfully from dyspepsia. She said she couldn't go. Randolph wouldn't go either ; he says he doesn't think much of old castles. But I guess we'll go this week, if we can get Randolph.'

'Your brother is not interested in ancient monuments ?' Winterbourne inquired, smiling.

'He says he don't care much about old castles. He's only nine. He wants to stay at the hotel. Mother's

afraid to leave him alone, and the courier won't stay with him ; so we haven't been to many places. But it will be too bad if we don't go up there.' And Miss Miller pointed again at the Château de Chillon.

'I should think it might be arranged,' said Winterbourne. 'Couldn't you get some one to stay—for the afternoon—with Randolph ?'

Miss Miller looked at him a moment ; and then, very placidly—'I wish *you* would stay with him !' she said.

Winterbourne hesitated a moment. 'I would much rather go to Chillon with you.'

'With me ?' asked the young girl, with the same placidity.

She didn't rise, blushing, as a young girl at Geneva would have done ; and yet Winterbourne, conscious that he had been very bold, thought it possible she was offended. 'With your mother,' he answered very respectfully.

But it seemed that both his audacity and his respect were lost upon Miss Daisy Miller. 'I guess my mother won't go, after all,' she said. 'She don't like to ride round in the afternoon. But did you really mean what you said just now ; that you would like to go up there ?'

'Most earnestly,' Winterbourne declared.

'Then we may arrange it.'—*Daisy Miller.*

## ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

1850-94

## AES TRIPLEX

THE changes wrought by death are in themselves so sharp and final, and so terrible and melancholy in their consequences, that the thing stands alone in man's experience, and has no parallel upon earth. It outdoes all other accidents because it is the last of them. Sometimes it leaps suddenly upon its victims, like a thug; sometimes it lays a regular siege and creeps upon their citadel during a score of years. And when the business is done, there is sore havoc made in other people's lives, and a pin knocked out by which many subsidiary friendships hung together. There are empty chairs, solitary walks, and single beds at night. Again, in taking away our friends, death does not take them away utterly, but leaves behind a mocking, tragical, and soon intolerable residue, which must be hurriedly concealed. Hence a whole chapter of sights and customs striking to the mind, from the pyramids of Egypt to the gibbets and dule trees of mediaeval Europe. The poorest persons have a bit of pageant going towards the tomb; memorial stones are set up over the least memorable; and, in order to preserve some show of respect for what remains of our old loves and friendships, we must accompany it with much grimly ludicrous ceremonial, and the hired undertaker parades before the door. All this, and much more of the same sort, accompanied by the eloquence of poets, has gone a great way to put humanity in error; nay,

in many philosophies the error has been embodied and laid down with every circumstance of logic ; although in real life the bustle and swiftness, in leaving people little time to think, have not left them time enough to go dangerously wrong in practice.

As a matter of fact, although few things are spoken of with more fearful whisperings than this prospect of death, few have less influence on conduct under healthy circumstances. We have all heard of cities in South America built upon the side of fiery mountains, and how, even in this tremendous neighbourhood, the inhabitants are not a jot more impressed by the solemnity of mortal conditions than if they were delving gardens in the greenest corner of England. There are serenades and suppers and much gallantry among the myrtles overhead ; and meanwhile the foundation shudders underfoot, the bowels of the mountain growl, and at any moment living ruin may leap sky-high into the moonlight, and tumble man and his merry-making in the dust. In the eyes of very young people, and very dull old ones, there is something indescribably reckless and desperate in such a picture. It seems not credible that respectable married people, with umbrellas, should find appetite for a bit of supper within quite a long distance of a fiery mountain ; ordinary life begins to smell of high-handed debauch when it is carried on so close to a catastrophe ; and even cheese and salad, it seems, could hardly be relished in such circumstances without something like a defiance of the Creator. It should be a place for nobody but hermits dwelling in prayer and maceration, or mere born-devils drowning care in a perpetual carouse.

And yet, when one comes to think upon it calmly, the situation of these South American citizens forms only a very pale figure for the state of ordinary mankind. This world itself, travelling blindly and swiftly in over-crowded space, among a million other worlds travelling blindly and swiftly in contrary directions, may very well come by a knock that would set it into explosion like a penny squib. And what, pathologically looked at, is the human body with all its organs, but a mere bagful of petards? The least of these is as dangerous to the whole economy as the ship's powder-magazine, to the ship; and with every breath we breathe, and every meal we eat, we are putting one or more of them in peril. If we clung as devotedly as some philosophers pretend we do to the abstract idea of life, or were half as frightened as they make out we are, for the subversive accident that ends it all, the trumpets might sound by the hour and no one would follow them into battle—the blue-peter might fly at the truck, but who would climb into a sea-going ship? Think (if these philosophers were right) with what a preparation of spirit we should affront the daily peril of the dinner-table; a deadlier spot than any battle-field in history, where the far greater proportion of our ancestors have miserably left their bones! What woman would ever be lured into marriage, so much more dangerous than the wildest sea? And what would it be to grow old? For, after a certain distance, every step we take in life we find the ice growing thinner below our feet, and all around us and behind us we see our contemporaries going through. By the time a man gets well into the seventies, his con-

tinued existence is a mere miracle ; and when he lays his old bones in bed for the night, there is an overwhelming probability that he will never see the day. Do the old men mind it, as a matter of fact ? Why, no. They were never merrier ; they have their grog at night, and tell the raciest stories ; they hear of the death of people about their own age, or even younger, not as if it was a grisly warning, but with a simple childlike pleasure at having outlived someone else ; and when a draught might puff them out like a guttering candle, or a bit of a stumble shatter them like so much glass, their old hearts keep sound and unaffrighted, and they go on, bubbling with laughter, through years of man's age compared to which the valley at Balaclava was as safe and peaceful as a village cricket-green on Sunday. It may fairly be questioned (if we look to the peril only) whether it was a much more daring feat for Curtius to plunge into the gulf, than for any old gentleman of ninety to doff his clothes and clamber into bed.

Indeed, it is a memorable subject for consideration, with what unconcern and gaiety mankind pricks on along the Valley of the Shadow of Death. The whole way is one wilderness of snares, and the end of it, for those who fear the last pinch, is irrevocable ruin. And yet we go spinning through it all, like a party for the Derby. Perhaps the reader remembers one of the humorous devices of the deified Caligula : how he encouraged a vast concourse of holiday-makers on to his bridge over Baiae bay ; and when they were in the height of their enjoyment, turned loose the Praetorian guards among the company, and had them tossed into the

sea. This is no bad miniature of the dealings of nature with the transitory race of man. Only, what a chequered picnic we have of it, even while it lasts ! and into what great waters, not to be crossed by any swimmer, God's pale Praetorian throws us over in the end !

We live the time that a match flickers ; we pop the cork of a ginger-beer bottle, and the earthquake swallows us on the instant. Is it not odd, is it not incongruous, is it not, in the highest sense of human speech, incredible, that we should think so highly of the ginger-beer, and regard so little the devouring earthquake ? The love of Life and the fear of Death are two famous phrases that grow harder to understand the more we think about them. It is a well-known fact that an immense proportion of boat accidents would never happen if people held the sheet in their hands instead of making it fast ; and yet, unless it be some martinet of a professional mariner or some landsman with shattered nerves, every one of God's creatures makes it fast. A strange instance of man's unconcern and brazen boldness in the face of death !

We confound ourselves with metaphysical phrases, which we import into daily talk with noble inappropriateness. We have no idea of what death is, apart from its circumstances and some of its consequences to others ; and although we have some experience of living, there is not a man on earth who has flown so high into abstraction as to have any practical guess at the meaning of the word *life*. All literature, from Job and Omar Khayyam to Thomas Carlyle or Walt Whitman, is but an attempt to look upon

the human state with such largeness of view as shall enable us to rise from the consideration of living to the Definition of Life. And our sages give us about the best satisfaction in their power when they say that it is a vapour, or a show, or made out of the same stuff with dreams. Philosophy, in its more rigid sense, has been at the same work for ages ; and after a myriad bald heads have wagged over the problem, and piles of words have been heaped one upon another into dry and cloudy volumes without end, philosophy has the honour of laying before us, with modest pride, her contribution towards the subject : that life is a Permanent Possibility of Sensation. Truly a fine result ! A man may very well love beef, or hunting, or a woman ; but surely, surely, not a Permanent Possibility of Sensation ! He may be afraid of a precipice, or a dentist, or a large enemy with a club, or even an undertaker's man ; but not certainly of abstract death. We may trick with the word life in its dozen senses until we are weary of tricking ; we may argue in terms of all the philosophies on earth, but one fact remains true throughout—that we do not love life, in the sense that we are greatly pre-occupied about its conservation ; that we do not, properly speaking, love life at all, but living. Into the views of the least careful there will enter some degree of providence ; no man's eyes are fixed entirely on the passing hour ; but although we have some anticipation of good health, good weather, wine, active employment, love, and self-approval, the sum of these anticipations does not amount to anything like a general view of life's possibilities and issues ; nor are those who cherish them most

vividly, at all the most scrupulous of their personal safety. To be deeply interested in the accidents of our existence, to enjoy keenly the mixed texture of human experience, rather leads a man to disregard precautions, and risk his neck against a straw. For surely the love of living is stronger in an Alpine climber roping over a peril, or a hunter riding merrily at a stiff fence, than in a creature who lives upon a diet and walks a measured distance in the interest of his constitution.

There is a great deal of very vile nonsense talked upon both sides of the matter : tearing divines reducing life to the dimensions of a mere funeral procession, so short as to be hardly decent ; and melancholy unbelievers yearning for the tomb as if it were a world too far away. Both sides must feel a little ashamed of their performances now and again when they draw in their chairs to dinner. Indeed, a good meal and a bottle of wine is an answer to most standard works upon the question. When a man's heart warms to his viands, he forgets a great deal of sophistry, and soars into a rosy zone of contemplation. Death may be knocking at the door, like the Commander's statue ; we have something else in hand, thank God, and let him knock. Passing bells are ringing all the world over. All the world over, and every hour, some one is parting company with all his aches and ecstasies. For us also the trap is laid. But we are so fond of life that we have no leisure to entertain the terror of death. It is a honeymoon with us all through and none of the longest. Small blame to us if we give our whole hearts to this glowing bride of ours, to the appetites, to honour, to the hungry curiosity of the mind, to the

pleasure of the eyes in nature, and the pride of our own nimble bodies.

We all of us appreciate the sensations ; but as for caring about the Permanence of the Possibility, a man's head is generally very bald, and his senses very dull, before he comes to that. Whether we regard life as a lane leading to a dead wall—a mere bag's end, as the French say—or whether we think of it as a vestibule or gymnasium, where we wait our turn and prepare our faculties for some more noble destiny ; whether we thunder in a pulpit, or pule in little atheistic poetry-books, about its vanity and brevity ; whether we look justly for years of health and vigour, or are about to mount into a Bath-chair, as a step towards the hearse ; in each and all of these views and situations there is but one conclusion possible : that a man should stop his ears against paralysing terror, and run the race that is set before him with a single mind. No one surely could have recoiled with more heartache and terror from the thought of death than our respected lexicographer ; and yet we know how little it affected his conduct, how wisely and boldly he walked, and in what a fresh and lively vein he spoke of life. Already an old man, he ventured on his Highland tour ; and his heart, bound with triple brass, did not recoil before twenty-seven individual cups of tea. As courage and intelligence are the two qualities best worth a good man's cultivation, so it is the first part of intelligence to recognize our precarious estate in life, and the first part of courage to be not at all abashed before the fact. A frank and somewhat headlong carriage, not looking too anxiously before, not dallying in maudlin regret over the past,

stamps the man who is well armoured for this world.

And not only well armoured for himself, but a good friend and a good citizen to boot. We do not go to cowards for tender dealing; there is nothing so cruel as panic; the man who has least fear for his own carcass, has most time to consider others. That eminent chemist who took his walks abroad in tin shoes, and subsisted wholly upon tepid milk, had all his work cut out for him in considerate dealings with his own digestion. So soon as prudence has begun to grow up in the brain, like a dismal fungus, it finds its first expression in a paralysis of generous acts. The victim begins to shrink spiritually; he develops a fancy for parlours with a regulated temperature, and takes his morality on the principle of tin shoes and tepid milk. The care of one important body or soul becomes so engrossing, that all the noises of the outer world begin to come thin and faint into the parlour with the regulated temperature; and the tin shoes go equably forward over blood and rain. To be otherwise is to ossify; and the scruple-monger ends by standing stockstill. Now the man who has his heart on his sleeve, and a good whirling weathercock of a brain, who reckons his life as a thing to be dashingly used and cheerfully hazarded, makes a very different acquaintance of the world, keeps all his pulses going true and fast, and gathers impetus as he runs, until, if he be running towards anything better than wildfire, he may shoot up and become a constellation in the end. Lord look after his health, Lord have a care of his soul, says he; and he has at the key of the position, and smashes through

incongruity and peril towards his aim. Death is on all sides of him with pointed batteries, as he is on all sides of all of us ; unfortunate surprises gird him round ; mim-mouthed friends and relations hold up their hands in quite a little elegiacal synod about his path : and what cares he for all this ? Being a true lover of living, a fellow with something pushing and spontaneous in his inside, he must, like any other soldier, in any other stirring, deadly warfare, push on at his best pace until he touch the goal. ‘ A peerage or Westminster Abbey ! ’ cried Nelson in his bright, boyish, heroic manner. These are great incentives ; not for any of these, but for the plain satisfaction of living, of being about their business in some sort or other, do the brave, serviceable men of every nation tread down the nettle danger, and pass flyingly over all the stumbling-blocks of prudence. Think of the heroism of Johnson, think of that superb indifference to mortal limitation that set him upon his dictionary, and carried him through triumphantly until the end ! Who, if he were wisely considerate of things at large, would ever embark upon any work much more considerable than a halfpenny post-card ? Who would project a serial novel, after Thackeray and Dickens had each fallen in mid-course ? Who would find heart enough to begin to live, if he dallied with the consideration of death ?

And, after all, what sorry and pitiful quibbling all this is ! To forgo all the issues of living in a parlour with a regulated temperature—as if that were not to die a hundred times over, and for ten years at a stretch ! As if it were not to die in one’s own lifetime, and without even the sad

immunities of death ! As if it were not to die, and yet be the patient spectators of our own pitiable change ! The Permanent Possibility is preserved, but the sensations carefully held at arm's length, as if one kept a photographic plate in a dark chamber. It is better to lose health like a spendthrift than to waste it like a miser. It is better to live and be done with it, than to die daily in the sickroom. By all means begin your folio ; even if the doctor does not give you a year ; even if he hesitates about a month, make one brave push and see what can be accomplished in a week. It is not only in finished undertakings that we ought to honour useful labour. A spirit goes out of the man who means execution, which outlives the most untimely ending. All who have meant good work with their whole hearts, have done good work, although they may die before they have the time to sign it. Every heart that has beat strong and cheerfully has left a hopeful impulse behind it in the world, and bettered the tradition of mankind. And even if death catch people, like an open pitfall, and in mid-career, laying out vast projects, and planning monstrous foundations, flushed with hope, and their mouths full of boastful language, they should be at once tripped up and silenced : is there not something brave and spirited in such a termination ? and does not life go down with a better grace, foaming in full body over a precipice, than miserably straggling to an end in sandy deltas ? When the Greeks made their fine saying that those whom the gods love die young, I cannot help believing they had this sort of death also in their eye. For surely, at whatever age it overtake the man, this

is to die young. Death has not been suffered to take so much as an illusion from his heart. In the hot-fit of life, a-tip-toe on the highest point of being, he passes at a bound on to the other side. The noise of the mallet and chisel is scarcely quenched, the trumpets are hardly done blowing, when, trailing with him clouds of glory, this happy-starred, full-blooded spirit shoots into the spiritual land.—*Virginibus Puerisque, and other Papers.*



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